



A BRIGAND IN LOVE

By Louise Winter

"WHEN a woman begins to philosophize, she is contemplating a way out of extremity," said Miriam Gray, her shrewd eyes turned toward her friend's troubled face.

Loring Bryce shifted her position slightly, as if to shield herself from close scrutiny. "I thought philosophy brought us resignation," she ventured.

Miriam shook her head. She was a tall, thin woman, decisive in manner as in thought. "Resignation to follow our own inclinations. We say the life that is, is impossible; we will make another for ourselves, an easier, better life; it is so simple. Since we have no voice in our entry into this world, since our poor human nature is fashioned of frail stuff, we must make the best of what we have."

"And what is wrong with that?"

"That we seldom do make the best of things. My dear Loring, I never would have spoken had you not given me this opening, but today you appear to wish that I would cease counterfeiting blindness. Your situation is not unusual. It is a very common one, and you are taking the common view of it. Married to a man coarser in fiber than yourself, you ignore the fact that most men have this coarser streak. You see only your hus-

band's defects, and he long ago gave up any attempt to gloss them over. He drinks, he gambles, he neglects you and makes light of the marriage tie. Don't protest—he is my own cousin, and I know him as well as you do—but you are his wife and he will not let you go from him publicly. In the eyes of his business associates he occupies a high position. He has a certain financial skill which enables him to make money easily. He takes tremendous chances and he comes out in a way that elicits admiration, for men appreciate success, often no matter how attained. He is proud of you. To praise you mildly, Loring, you are very good-looking; you have tact, charm, the instincts of a good hostess; you grace his home and you reflect credit upon his wealth. Either through disillusion or temperament, you have built up a reputation for coldness which my cousin Percy is quick to perceive. You have been married for ten years, and you have kept the skirts of your social frock free from the dust of scandal. Percy goes his way and you go yours. His is a wicked way. Yours till now has been innocent; but now, my dear, you begin to philosophize, and I, your friend, begin to wonder."

Loring stretched out her slender hand and studied it reflectively. "To wonder what?" she said.

"That is the question I am asking myself. Why do you seek consolation from philosophy?"

"Perhaps because I am tired of pose; perhaps because for once I wish to unbuckle the armor of affectation. If I unburden myself to you, Miriam, it is because I trust you."

"Don't!" Miriam spoke sharply. "I am like any other woman. If you have a secret, keep it to yourself. If you want my help, don't bother to tell me in so many words why you need it."

Loring smiled. "You will give it blindly?"

"Perhaps not blindly, but specters take perfect shape only when they are put into words. You feel a danger, you sense a temptation; but don't give it verbal form; let it remain nebulous; it will die more easily that way."

"Oh!" The cry burst from Loring's white lips, as she sat up suddenly and faced her friend with anguished eyes. "How you understand!"

Miriam rose and came over to the couch. She seated herself beside Loring and slipped her arm about her waist. "Perhaps I, too, have tried philosophy and got no comfort from it," she said.

"Miriam, I wish I could die!"

"We all wish that when our path seems too complicated. Fortunately we can live down most things, and unnourished emotion has a brief tenure of life. I don't belittle your trouble, dear; I have seen it coming for two years, and I am sorry for you, so sorry. Had things been different, you and he might have been very happy; but if I read him aright, he loves the woman you are, not the woman you would become. There are certain doors to which we dare not offer any man the key."

"He has gone, Miriam, and I let him go; but was it worth while, when I love him? I love him!" The bars were down at last, and she would have given free rein to the first big emotion that had ever come into her singularly sheltered life, but Miriam Gray would not listen. She checked confidence at the outset.

She knew too well that shame would later outweigh gratitude, and she was too genuinely fond of this cousin by marriage to hesitate to shield her even from herself.

"Hush! We think such things, but we never say them." Her voice was stern, and it had the desired effect.

Loring made a brave effort to pull herself together. "Shall we have tea up here?" she asked.

Miriam nodded. In her heart she said: "No wonder he loves you." But she kept her thoughts to herself, and while tea was being served touched on trivialities.

"I like the way you are doing your hair," she remarked.

Loring bent her head over the tea urn as she felt the blood rising in her cheeks. She had adopted the style because of a remark of the man she loved, and she was secretly proud that she could wear a fashion so severe. Till recently, while she had never underestimated her good looks, she had never sought greatly to enhance them.

Lately, however, the eager striving to please one person had crept into her life, and though she never openly admitted it, the desire to look well in his eyes was uppermost in her mind.

"I got tired of the bobbing curls," Loring said. "They made me feel as if I were aping sixteen. And, as a matter of fact, I'll soon be comfortably middle-aged."

"Nonsense! You're only twenty-nine. I'm ten years older, and have had five children."

"If I only had one! A woman's life is very empty that has no baby feet pattering across its threshold."

Miriam put down her teacup firmly. "Don't let such ideas gain headway. The childless woman overestimates our blessings. Children are a great joy, but not an unmixed joy; for every ounce of happiness they give us, there is a corresponding pound of worry. If you really feel the lack of childish companionship, go into the missions and mother the worse than orphans. Think about the misery of others, and you will have less time to brood over your own woes."

"What a paradox you are! The sharpest tongue and the kindest heart in the world."

"Thanks. I don't know that I deserve either compliment."

Loring laughed at the dubious expression that crossed Miriam's face, and for a moment the load which oppressed her so heavily lifted.

II

LORING BRYCE had gone through the earlier chapters of her life without having her heart really touched. Left an orphan in childhood, when she was not at boarding schools she was parceled out among her various relatives to visit, and they looked upon her as an incumbrance. A pretty child, her prettiness increased as she approached womanhood. She was slenderly formed, taller than the average, with a natural grace of carriage. Even in early youth she had a high bred air, a look of birth and breeding that distinguished her from the mass of her companions passing through the formless period of schoolgirlhood. She was singularly direct, frank in speech and pure-minded; it was only after years of bitter experience that she began to dissect motives and to distrust principles. As her means were limited, her several aunts decided that an early marriage was the best way of disposing of her, so at eighteen she left school, was brilliantly launched, went through her first season without mishap, and at the end was awarded to Percy Bryce, a successful young manipulator of the stock market, who was captivated by her beauty.

He was madly in love with her—he told her so repeatedly, and she did not doubt him. She did not know how requisite it was to a happy marriage that her feeling for him should be more than a tolerant liking. She was a burden to her relatives, and it was her duty to accept the first opportunity of relieving them of her care. There was a short engagement, during which Percy Bryce was on his good behavior. He gave dinners and theater parties, and planned one affair after another, being of the

opinion, as he said, that "if a fellow gave a girl a good time, she was bound to like him." He rather admired her reserve before marriage; he had a glimpse of depths in her nature that he felt some day would be worth exploring, but he did not realize that it would be impossible for a man of his limitations to fathom those depths. She was sweet and submissive in the beginning of their married life; the barrier of reserve that had fascinated him before continued, and soon proved to be an irksome restraint. When he once realized that she could never respond to the only affection he was capable of giving, he ceased to care for her, and his indifference gradually deepened into actual dislike. Loring bore it all stolidly, at first with dull wonder, then with proud stoicism. That he should prefer the society of such common creatures as he associated with was in the beginning a source of amazement; afterward she accepted everything, coming in the end to believe him more guilty than he really was.

Had Miriam Gray come into her life then, with her cool judgment of men and their ways, Loring might have been persuaded to make an effort to reclaim her husband, but at that time she had no friend to whom she could turn for advice, and she did not know how to stoop and rekindle a waning interest. When the Grays did come East to live, Loring had been married for six years and her position was definitely outlined.

The Bryces occupied a handsome modern house near the Park. Percy had his motor car, one of the first in New York, but Loring clung to her brougham and victoria. He had his suite of rooms, she had hers. They seldom dined at home, never alone together, sending for anyone at the last moment rather than face a *l'été-à-l'été*. He had his friends, she hers; and her set was comprised of people mostly older than herself. She declared she had little in common with women of her age, yet she was welcome wherever she went, being gracious in manner, a trifle distant toward men, but charming to women.

Miriam Gray knit her brows over the situation, then held out the hand of good

fellowship. She made one attempt to talk it over with Percy, who had been brought up in her home; but he told her brusquely to mind her own business, and she took his advice up to a certain point. She gave Loring the secret sympathy that women know how to impart to each other, but she never made an open reference to the existing state of affairs in her cousin's household.

And she never had an unquiet moment until the year Paul Redding came into Loring's life.

Redding was a lieutenant in the navy, who loved the sea, and bore a breath of it about him. He had a masterful way, as if youth gave him royal prerogatives. His smile was particularly winning. It was a wholesome face, and the mind that lay back of his clear eyes was honest. He was not intellectual, though fairly well read, but he was quick-witted and he had a deep sense of humor. He had a warm heart, an affectionate disposition and a ready tongue. At first he misunderstood the nature of his attraction toward Loring. She was a pretty woman to be flattered, and, when the proper moment arrived, to be made love to, in the conventional fashion; but long before that moment arrived the fleeting impression had deepened to one of grave significance.

They met at a week end house party. He had been invited to amuse the debutante daughter, but it became so apparent that he was attracted by Loring Bryce that the girl, having a prior attachment of her own, took opportunities of throwing them together. He did not realize how plainly he was showing his feelings, and Loring did not dream that the unrest she was experiencing came from other causes than nerves. He was pleasant to be with; his appearance gratified her critical eye; he had a deferential manner that disarmed suspicion, and he was so openly devoted to her that her woman's vanity could not fail to be touched. When they parted he won her consent to an early meeting.

Face to face with a serious temptation, Paul Redding threshed the matter out and vowed that no word of his should offend her. After registering that vow,

he felt strong enough to see her frequently and keep his passion under control. Fate favored him, and they met from time to time; and he kept true to his vow, but at great cost to himself. Then he began to notice that her eye faltered as she came upon him suddenly, that her lips trembled, that her hand in touching his was strangely cold; and he exulted in these signs, for they told him that she was beginning to care.

It was the strangest summer Loring ever spent. Percy Bryce was yachting in the waters around Norway. She was mistress of her time, and she refused to reckon how much of it was spent in New York with Paul Redding. She was constantly passing through the city, from one house party to another, and it was remarkable how her wardrobe needed replenishing.

Redding was stationed at the navy yard, and a wire brought him to the train to meet her. He was frequently consulted about her purchases, trivial things which he took seriously, as she would have him take them. As the summer drew to a close both realized that they were approaching the danger line, but both were assured of their ability to draw back in good season. So it was not until one evening, when they had been to a roof garden together and were driving slowly uptown, that the incident occurred which showed them the folly of pretense. A fire engine dashed through a side street and swung into the avenue just in front of their hansom. The horse attached took fright and started to gallop. Loring was thrown violently against Redding and his arms closed round her.

"Don't be afraid, sweetheart; it's all right," he whispered, his mouth touching her ear.

She gave a sigh and turned to him impulsively. "Do you think I am afraid now, Paul?" It was the first time she had used his name, and she gave it all the tender intonation that love inspires; and he, thrilling with the contact of her form held close to his breast, understood that fear was eliminated in the joy of that moment. The driver gained control of

his horse, and the terrified beast after a few plunges settled down to a walk. Then Loring stirred, and instantly Redding's arms relaxed and dropped to his side. Neither spoke again till they stood in the vestibule of her house. His hand was on the bell, but he withdrew it without ringing.

"Loring!" he pleaded, putting all his pent-up longing into his voice as he breathed her name. His arms ached to hold her fast once more. She knew what he was asking, but she steeled herself against surrender. She shook her head and moved away from him. He understood and rang sharply. Her maid opened the door.

"Good night," and she held out her hand.

He took it in his, trying by pressure to wrest another sign from her, but she would not respond.

"Good night," he answered.

She dared not send him a backward glance, though she knew he was still lingering. She was fighting fiercely for her self-control.

And, though she passed a sleepless night, she conquered. In the morning she left town on an early train, and did not return until she opened her house in November. He had written to her, but she left his letter unanswered. This thing which had come into her life was too sweet to degrade.

They met again by chance. Redding was thinner, and suffering had turned the humor in his eyes to bitterness. He was not bearing the strain well, and her heart went out to him in pity. He seemed so young to be weighed down by sorrow. Her agony of remorse for her share in his unhappiness made her kinder than she had ever dreamed of being. They agreed to banish love from their vocabulary, and to call this thing friendship, for only in this way could they hope to stamp out the violence of their mad fever.

They rehearsed arguments to convince each other, and they honestly believed them for a time; but Miriam Gray, who was looking on, foresaw a crisis and stood at one side, waiting.

III

ALL that winter they kept up their fiction. In the spring Redding was transferred to another post, and came to her to tell the news.

What he hoped from that interview he scarcely acknowledged even to himself, but he carried away from it the conviction of a great love. Yet she sent him from her promising nothing. She idealized him as well as their passion. She was anxious that it should uplift, not debase them, and she succeeded in imbuing him with part of her ardor. She was willing to annihilate self, but she must keep the pure spirit of love alive; and how she told him these things, and made him accept them, was a mystery to him afterward. Viewed at a distance from the magnetism of her presence, he did not believe in these altruistic theories. He was a man in love and he wanted the woman he loved for his own. He was jealous of even the nominal part her husband played in her life. He could see no valid objection to a dissolution of her legal ties. A marriage such as hers was no marriage at all. Why then pretend that it was a binding ceremony, and cling to the outward semblance of a union? He wrote to her for a year—brave, manly letters, urging her to take steps to free herself, though he could offer so little besides his love in comparison to what he asked her to give up. And she answered, pouring out her soul in reply, but steadily refusing to adopt the course indicated. She knew Percy Bryce too well. He would bitterly resent any attempt on her part to end a comfortable domestic arrangement; he would fight her effort to obtain a release. His wealth would give him every advantage, and if she did win her freedom, it would be at the cost of her self-respect, and the name she brought to her lover would be soiled by the ignoble struggle.

Miriam agreed with her—there was nothing to do but wait; and yet neither woman could tell what was to be gained by waiting. Once, when he got leave and came to New York, Loring refused to see him. He hung about the house all day,

hoping to catch a glimpse of her; but she watched him from behind the curtains of her room and scourged her heart when it cried out in longing.

Redding went back to his duty, and his next letter showed the first sign of discouragement. Loring's heart sickened with fear as she read. Men were differently constituted than women; they could not see the beauty of self-sacrifice. Suppose he tired of the long waiting, and the fierce flame of his love died out? She scanned the brief lines of the letters that followed and curbed the outpourings of her own facile pen. So another year drifted by. He was ill, and he sent her a note from the hospital. Twice she packed her bag to go to him, and twice unpacked it. She was learning to hug her grief to her bosom, as she had once hugged her joy. When he was convalescent, he went home on sick leave. He wrote her once after his arrival, and again, six weeks later, to deal her the blow which altered her whole life.

He wrote: "God knows, I thought my love for you was the most stable thing in my world; but Agnes and I were boy and girl sweethearts, and I was lonely and despondent when I came home, and she was good to me. You were as far out of my reach as ever, and our future looked so hopeless. You would not yield one step, and, after all, what right had I to urge you to give up everything for me? I am not trying to excuse what I have done; I am just stating facts as they happened. It is to be a long engagement. I'm in line for sea duty, and my orders may come any day." There was an incoherent plea for leniency, a wail of bitterness, and the letter ended abruptly. There were not quite two pages of writing, yet Loring pored over them for hours. That it should end by her sending him to seek happiness with someone else had been one of the dim possibilities that had tortured her consciousness, but that he should be the one to break the slender chain that bound them together had never suggested itself. Paul was hers! He had protested his love so often that she had come to regard it as her surest possession. She could not credit his defection. She had assured

herself that he would wait and trust even as she waited and trusted. Yet here was his own letter to attest that he had tired at last and had come to accept a second best in life. And it was a second best, for even now he only spoke of Agnes's goodness; he never said he had grown to care for her.

Then, as if to mock her with the futility of striving to win over fate, Percy Bryce was killed in an automobile accident. The paper which chronicled his death had an item in the Army and Navy news under the heading of orders: "Lieut. Paul Dencla Redding to the U. S. S. *Poughkeepsie*." And the U. S. S. *Poughkeepsie* would sail from San Francisco for duty in the East in a fortnight!

Loring came across the item by chance. She was free. She shed no tears at her husband's death. She was conscious of a vague regret that he had been cut off so suddenly, for he had loved life; but their existence had been so separate that even his death could not affect her greatly. People said she looked like one stricken by an uncontrollable sorrow, and they wondered if, after all, she had loved him. Her aunts came and proffered conventional words of sympathy, but even as they uttered them they were appraising her mourning and wondering if Bryce's will would leave everything to his widow. But Loring neither noticed the curious looks nor heeded the commonplace utterances. Paul was to sail for Manila in less than two weeks; she might never see him again; even now he was lost to her, for he had voluntarily pledged himself to another woman. Was it too late to break that tie? Was his honor involved? Would a broken engagement hurt his standing in the service? She tortured herself with vain imaginings. He had sent her no word. Perhaps he was ignorant of Percy's death. Suppose he should marry this Agnes, not knowing that she was free?

"Why don't you go away, slip off by yourself—or if you want company take Frances?" Miriam said. Loring had not told her of Paul Redding's engagement, and she wondered if a morbid exaggera-

tion of affairs were not producing a sort of remorse.

Loring looked up. "You are right; I'll go. But I don't want Frances; I'm not fit company for a young girl. I'm suffering. I'll go tonight. Tell people anything you like, and I'll write to you. Oh, how glad I am you suggested it! I wanted to go, Miriam, but I didn't dare." She spoke with feverish haste.

Miriam frowned. "I am not quite sure that I understand."

"You need not; I'll explain when I can. Just now I have a good deal to do; thank you for all your kindness, and please leave me. You shall know in good time, dear; I promise you that."

And Miriam left her.

Loring did not pause to consider. She would see him once more before he sailed, before he made good his pledge to that other woman. What the outcome of their meeting would be, what he would think of her for rushing across the continent after him, did not bother her then. There would be plenty of time for reflection when the ocean was between them. She had only a few hours to make preparations. Traveling at the fastest speed, she would have less than four days in San Francisco before the squadron sailed.

She called Nanette and gave her orders. The maid, an elderly French woman, raised her hands in horror.

"San Francisco! But, madame, that is the end of the world." And Loring smiled faintly.

Nanette shrugged her shoulders and wondered if her mistress were quite sane. This hurried trip, so soon after monsieur's death, did not fit in with her idea of the conventions.

Loring concentrated her mind on the thought that she would soon see him face to face, soon hear the tones of his voice, and the long monotonous hours of her journey slipped by. As they drew into the station she summoned the porter.

"I want a quiet hotel, overlooking the bay," she said, and he mentioned a name that appealed to her.

From the window of her room she saw the white cruisers lying at anchor in the beautiful harbor. Peaceful and serene

they floated on the still waters of the bay like gulls at rest, but to Loring's overwrought brain there was something sinister in their very calm. She dispatched a note to Redding, a briefly worded note, saying that she was here for a few days and asking him to dine with her that night.

It was four o'clock when the messenger departed. Barely an hour later Paul came, bringing his own answer.

He was shown up into her sitting room, and as she came forward to meet him every vestige of color left her cheeks. She suddenly realized what she had done and shame made her tremble like a shy schoolgirl.

He stared at her, his heart in his eyes. "You—you!" he said, fighting to control the longing to seize her in his arms as she stood with downcast eyes before him; then he gave up the struggle and caught her to his breast, knowing nothing beyond the fact that she was here, caring for nothing but the sweetness of that moment. And after one protest she surrendered her lips to him, as she had long ago surrendered her heart.

Afterward, when they began to talk, he begged her to marry him at once. He wanted to make her his wife now, secretly if she wished, on account of her mourning; then in a few months, when her affairs were settled, she could join him at Manila, and they could have the ceremony performed over again publicly. It could only bind them closer to each other, and in the meantime they would have the memory of their first wonderful days together. He brushed aside Agnes's claim. It wasn't a real love, and she would get over it. Perhaps by this time she was wondering how she had drifted into an engagement and was regretting her mistake. He argued well, for he was pleading for the happiness of his whole life, and distance lessened the charm of his betrothed. He told Loring he had planned to break it off as soon as he learned of Percy Bryce's death, for it was not fair to marry one woman when body and soul belonged to another. Agnes deserved something better than he could give her, and though he had intended doing the thing gradually, so as

to spare her feelings, now he would do it quickly, and in the end Agnes would thank him for being honest with her.

Loring listened, and half despising herself for her ready acquiescence, admitted that their love had the prior claim.

"But you must write to her today, telling her that you want your freedom," she said.

And he promised. He did write, a manly, straightforward letter, telling as much of the truth as he could. He spoke of his love for Loring, which he had come to believe hopeless, but now that she was free to be won, he asked Agnes to forgive him and set him at liberty. But he did not speak of the wedding to be celebrated on the morrow, and the letter, strangely enough, miscarried. He saw the necessity for secrecy which Loring insisted upon.

"For what would the world think of me, scarcely two weeks a widow and giving my hand to another? Don't shake your head, Paul; you know it matters what the world thinks. We live in it, and we cannot afford to ignore its rules of conduct. Had we been lawless, you and I, we would have given in to our love long ago; but we fought against great odds, and we conquered—and this is our reward."

And so they were married, and they carried out their plans so well that not one of his fellow officers suspected. The thought of Agnes, whom she was robbing, intruded once or twice during the brief intervals when Redding was obliged to leave her alone, but she told herself: "I am taking nothing from her but an empty glory. What he gives me was mine from the beginning."

He never mentioned Agnes after that first day. Then he told brief facts. She was an orphan and lived with some cousins. He admitted that she was pretty, a few years younger than himself, and capable, managing marvelously well on a small income. Loring pictured her short, dark, with firm, skillful hands that were never idle, but always seeking some homely household task to perform—the type of girl which would appeal to a sick man's fancy, who

would make him think her mission in life was to take care of him. Loring had never taken care of herself since her school days, and she was almost ashamed to think how dependent she was upon her maid. She wondered if he would have loved her more had she been less helpless. No, this Agnes, with her managing ways, might have attracted the sick man, but Paul, in his strength, wanted a woman he could worship, not one who would worship him.

In these days love was a perfect thing between them. There were depths of tenderness and breadths of passion in Loring which Redding had never suspected. She revealed to him the wealth of her nature; she read his moods and fitted herself to them with the rare delicacy that comes from a perfect understanding. She loved him as a woman loves once in a lifetime, and she had treasured up so much affection in the last three years that now when she opened the floodgates of her heart it overflowed and bathed him about with the glory of a great love. And in those days he never disappointed her. He was all she had fancied him. There was no jarring note, no unpleasant moment, no bitter aftermath.

They would not think of their impending separation. When he spoke of Manila she laid her fingers over his lips. But when the final day dawned and they turned to face the future, she clung to him weeping bitterly and begging for strength to bear the loneliness which must ensue. Sore at heart, he did his best to comfort her, but his own mind was curiously full of misgivings. They had been too happy, and some of his mistrust of the future crept into his voice and made her also afraid.

He left her at midnight to go aboard his ship; she vowed to rest on the cushions he had heaped up in front of the window that daybreak might find her on watch.

"You shall wave to me once from your porthole, and once as you pass out of the harbor, and then it will be good-bye, sweetheart, for a long, long while."

"God grant it may not be too long! I can't tell you what you are to me, but

the rest of my life shall prove how I value your love."

"Don't! You make me want to talk of what you are to me, and if I begin I shall never have strength to let you go."

To the woman who had knelt for hours before the window, day seemed a slug-gard rising from a too comfortable couch. Her eyes searched the bay below, and as the forms of the ships took shape out of the darkness, they fastened eagerly on one great white vessel. The fleet no longer looked like a peaceful flock of gulls; they were fierce birds of prey anxious to snatch her brief morsel of happiness from her. The uncertain future made the present moment poignant with anguish. Now she could distinguish the *Poughkeepsie* plainly. It lay to the right of the flagship, and his cabin was on the starboard side so that she would soon catch a glimpse of him at his porthole. Unshed tears burned in her eyes, but she wiped them away hastily, lest he appear at the narrow aperture while her vision was dimmed. She could barely make him out when he did appear, but every feature was so stamped on her heart that she filled in the vague outline, and in fancy saw the brave smile he would force to his lips to comfort her.

Her slender hands grasped the wooden sill to keep herself upright while he waved to her. Then he withdrew and she sank limply to the pillows. She was worn with grief. The intensity of her suffering had dulled her mind. She could not look beyond the present hour which held nothing but the bald fact of their separation.

Gradually the signs of preparation for immediate departure became more active, and Loring raised herself to watch to the bitter end. It was day now, a gloomy day with fitful clouds obscuring the sun and a promise of rain in the air. She shivered as a damp wind floated across the bay and stirred the curtains at her open window.

People gathered along the water front, idle spectators and those who, like herself, had loved ones aboard bound for strange ports. The ships swung slowly into position, and the big white cruiser

flying the rear admiral's flag turned majestically and steamed out of the harbor. In single file they moved, her husband's ship the next in line, and she strained her eyes to make him out at the rail.

Then, when the third ship came into view, blotting out his form, her strength left her suddenly, and she fell on her knees sobbing the deep rasping sobs of the desolate.

IV

THAT night Loring started for home. Numb with sorrow, she lived only in the memory of the days that had been so sweet. The murmur of the swiftly moving train beat into her brain. "A mile further away! A mile further away!"

Six months at least must elapse before she could broach the subject of a trip to Japan. She would take Frances, Miriam's eldest daughter, with her. The longer journey to Manila would follow; she would find some plausible excuse for that. Then there would be a month or two of courtship, and how delightful that would be with behind it all the knowledge of their precious relationship!

And so the hours passed. On the third day, as Loring gazed steadily out of the window, seeing nothing but a vision of her own conjuring, there was suddenly a violent jar, a noise of crashing wood and broken glass. She screamed and tried to struggle to her feet. Then came oblivion.

The newspaper accounts of the wreck gave among the list of the dead, the name of Mrs. Percy Bryce, of New York. The body was frightfully charred, but was identified by a bag containing papers bearing her name and by some jewelry. This was the news which greeted Paul Redding when he arrived at Manila. He could not believe it, and he cabled to the railroad company and to Loring's bankers in New York, but they confirmed the report. It was some time before the truth became known and it was discovered that Nanette's body had been mistaken for that of her mistress, and that Loring lay for weeks in a country hospital, unknown and unknowing.

This later information, however, did not reach Redding, and he abandoned himself to his grief, living over every moment of the past and finding his only consolation in the few letters Loring had given him to be read on the trip out. They were beautiful letters, reiterating all the tender avowals of her love and devotion. She had written them at odd moments when he was on duty. After she had given herself she had no more doubts, and did not scruple to let him share her inmost thoughts. But through them ran a fantastic strain of superstition. Would they be allowed to live on in perfect bliss, or would the gods become jealous and punish them for snatching prematurely at happiness? There was a price to pay for everything. Had they paid fully? Poor Loring! How little she had dreamed that the gods were even then pursuing her, and that payment would be exacted by life itself! Paul shuddered now as he read the quaint fancy, which at first had made him smile tenderly, and he wondered with a borrowed touch of her superstition whether she had not invited disaster by dwelling upon its possibility. But he was not even allowed to mourn long.

In the next mail was a letter from Agnes. Her cousins were going to South America; she did not wish to accompany them, and as there was nothing to keep her at home she was coming out to join him on the next transport, and they could be married at once. An army friend of hers was going out to meet her husband; it was a splendid opportunity, and she knew he would be glad to have her share his exile. Of course she would not have time to get together much of a trousseau, but he would overlook that, and she had been told sewing women were cheap in the Philippines. Redding looked at the date. The postmark was a month old. If she had held to her purpose she was even now on her way out, and it would be too late to stop her. What had become of his letter asking for his release? Perhaps it had been delayed, and in case it arrived later it would change her plans; but if it didn't, what would he do then? He had loved Loring so deeply that even now he could

scarcely believe she had been taken from him, and with his soul mourning for the woman he had worshiped, he was bidden to prepare another marriage feast. He told himself he could not do it, and yet if Agnes came what excuse could he make? He could not repudiate her—that was an insult the service would not overlook. He could not explain without telling the truth, and that would involve a criticism of Loring. If he sent Agnes back to her home, she would be openly pitied and secretly jeered at. His hands were tied and his lips sealed. For a moment he contemplated suicide; but he had a strong sense of justice, and such a deed would also reflect on the honor of his betrothed. His career as an officer had been blameless, there were no money matters, no levity of conduct to account for death at his own hand. He saw no way out of the trouble save acquiescence. Distasteful as the medicine was, he must swallow it. The mess was of his own brewing. Had he remained true to his love for Loring, this entanglement would never have occurred, and he would have been free to mourn openly for the dead woman, but he had trifled with his higher feelings and now he must accept what offered.

In the weeks that followed he went around like a man in a daze, but when he knew the transport was due and that Agnes was on board, he announced his approaching marriage. He accepted the congratulations of his brother officers, drank toasts and listened to speeches, though his face was haggard and his eyes were those of a man who suffered.

He escaped at last to his cabin and sat up until morning reading over Loring's letters till every word was indelibly stamped on his brain, then he tied them together, weighted them with a stone and dropped them overboard. He dared not keep them to remind him always of his brief happiness.

V

LORING opened her eyes in her own room in New York. A trained nurse stood by the bedside. Slowly, like dis-

solving shadows, the clouds melted from her brain, and she began to recall first Percy's death, then her own hurried trip to the coast, her secret marriage to Paul Redding and the accident to the train on her way home. She wondered how Nanette had fared, and made up her mind to ask the nurse, who in a vague way seemed familiar; then she wondered where Miriam was and how soon she would come in to see her.

The nurse approached the bed and suggested that she get up.

"I don't believe I can," said Loring doubtfully. She felt weak, unnerved.

"Try." The woman had a persuasive manner, and to her surprise Loring found she was stronger than she had supposed. She dressed slowly and put on a white negligee; then, when she was seated in a big chair near the window the door opened and Miriam came in.

"Darling, how nice to see you like this!" she said. An unwonted show of tenderness in her manner roused Loring's suspicions.

"Have I been ill long?" she asked.

"Over two months."

"Then I must have been badly hurt."

Miriam drew up a chair and sat down, then she laid her firm, white hand over Loring's thin fingers. "That's been the queer part of it. You've been all right physically for weeks, but you've seemed stunned, and we haven't been able to rouse you. You answered when we spoke to you, but you wouldn't talk. I was so glad when Miss Worth 'phoned me, I came at once."

Loring ignored her friend's anxiety. If she had been ill for more than two months Paul would have had time to write from Manila.

"Where are my letters?" she asked.

Miriam tried to put her off. "You don't wish to bother with them today. Remember how dreadfully ill you've been."

"I promise not to read many, only one or two." And she smiled gently. It would be a comfort just to handle the envelopes, to see the closely written pages even if she did not read them at once. And what must Paul think? Could he know of her accident? If not,

how would he interpret her silence? She must manage to reassure him at once.

Miriam, after an interrogative glance at the nurse, rose and opened the desk. "Loring, there are simply hundreds!"

Without a thought of her weakness Loring crossed to her cousin's side.

The letters were piled in neat stacks. She upset them looking for the long white envelopes Paul always used. But what she sought she could not find.

"Can I help you?" Miriam was worried.

"How can you, when you don't know what I want?" Loring spoke sharply, on the verge of tears with disappointment. "Call Nanette; she will know."

"Nanette has been ill. She can't come at present."

"Poor Nanette!" Then she said suddenly: "Tell me the news, Miriam. Hasn't anything of interest happened in two months?" She was feverishly excited, and plied her cousin with questions until Miss Worth interfered.

But that night she seemed so much better when Miriam stepped in that the latter gave her the information she so evidently sought. There had been a notice of Paul Redding's marriage in the *Herald*, and Miriam had read it.

Loring received the announcement in silence. Then she suddenly found voice. "Why are you lying to me, Miriam?" she cried. "You know Paul Redding is my husband!"

Anne Worth laid a finger on her lips, and together they carried the stricken woman to her bed, believing her words to be spoken in delirium.

Miriam's remorse for her premature disclosure made her very gentle, and she watched day after day by the invalid's side until Loring rallied again. She asked for details, and Miriam brought her a copy of the newspaper which gave an account of the wedding in the Philippines. She also told Loring of the report of her own death, and how they had brought Nanette's body home and had given it burial in the family plot; that it was only a few weeks ago that they had learned Loring was groping her way back to health in a strange city, and

that she had been home only about ten days.

This explained Paul's failure to write. He thought her dead. What would he say when he learned the truth? Would not his joy at that knowledge repay him for all he had suffered? She was bitter at first that he had been in such a hurry to marry Agnes, but as she came to realize the position in which he had found himself, she began, womanlike, to make excuses for him. He could have the second marriage annulled. Indeed, it was no marriage, and it would be a sin to allow him to remain under such a delusion for another day. She must cable her glad tidings for all their sakes. She wondered whether Agnes had never received Paul's letter asking for his freedom, or whether she had chosen to ignore it and had gone out to force him to keep his troth. Poor Paul! What must his life be, bearing about with him always this hidden grief? How could she arrange things so as to make it easy for him? He was her sole consideration; his whole future lay in her hands.

Miriam marveled at Loring's silence, divining that there was more to this affair than was apparent, but true to her policy she never sought to compel confidence. That Loring's journey had to do with Redding she was quite sure, but her soul was big enough to wait in patience until her cousin opened her lips of her own will.

In spite of her haste to set matters right, Loring did not cable that day nor the next; instead, she began to study the question from another point of view. If she had not taken her mad journey all these frightful mishaps could not have occurred. If she had not flung herself into his arms, but waited until he had released himself honorably from his engagement, things would have been different. But she had flown to his side the moment she was free; she had forced their marriage; she had stolen her happiness prematurely; and now she was face to face with the consequences. Her analytical nature made her ponder deeply before she took another step. She dissected the feeling which prompted her to interfere without delay. Was it

to save Paul from continuing in a wrong relation, or was it because she could not bear the thought of his belonging to another woman? Were her rights paramount or must she take Agnes's claims into consideration—Agnes who would suffer so cruelly by the revelation? But try as she would, Loring could not summon up a keen pity for Agnes. It was only as her disgrace affected Paul that she figured in the matter. There was no way of untangling the web save by an ugly scandal in which Paul's honor would be tarnished. The world would not understand that his loyalty to Loring made him prefer to go on with this horrible second marriage rather than divulge their secret; the world would say he owed a greater fealty to the living than to the dead; the world would remember that Agnes was a young girl, and it would blame him for the wrong he had unconsciously done her. And then there was the navy code to consider. It might mean a court martial, dismissal from the service. And Paul was a born sailor; there was no other life open to him. All these thoughts made her hesitate. She had robbed Agnes of her lover. Could she take her husband as well?

And so days passed while she fought out her battle, and weeks passed, and she did nothing. She suffered, grew thin, and pallid, and still she could come to no conclusion. Was she strong enough to carry through such a sacrifice? It not only involved silence now but it meant sealing her lips for all time. If she did not claim her own at once, she relinquished every right in the future. And then one night, while she was still struggling to do the right thing, she fell asleep in pain. But when she awoke in the morning she was conscious of a great joy.

VI

"Now tell me of Dr. Hoffman." Loring had dined with the Grays, and after dinner had elected to remain with Miriam's husband while Miriam herself chaperoned a party of Frances's young friends to the theater.

Henry Gray looked up. A flash of

real interest dawned in his light blue eyes. "David Hoffman? It is a long story, for it goes back to my school days."

"He was your hero, then? How seldom our childish enthusiasms last! I remember my idol at boarding school; I met her afterward, and was disgusted with her artificiality, which in earlier days I had so greatly admired."

"David Hoffman was an unusual boy; he is an unusual man, a humanitarian, in the broadest sense of the word. At school we little chaps looked up to him. He was the tallest, strongest boy in his class, a brilliant scholar and an athlete. When he left to enter college we felt a personal loss, and I was not the only one who followed his subsequent career with interest. He studied medicine, and went in for surgery, going abroad to finish. When he returned he opened a clinic in Chicago, and we heard of him from time to time performing some wonderful operation. I saw him there once, a dominant figure, sure of himself, inspiring confidence by his own superb strength and disarming fear by his gentleness. With his enormous private practice he found time to devote several hours a day to the poor, whom he treated without pay, giving them the same consideration that he gave to his wealthy patients. But when he was at the zenith of his fame his health failed suddenly. It was diagnosed at first as a common nervous breakdown, and he was advised to take a long rest. He disappeared and was gone for two years. He returned apparently cured, but about a month after he resumed work he handed the knife to his assistant at the operating table and walked out of the hospital. He never went back."

"His nerve failed him?"

"At a critical moment; and he realized that his weakness was deep seated. Since that time he has lived apart. He spent years searching for a climate that would build up the nervous tissues, and he has found it at last. Do you remember a couple of years ago, when I was run down, I went into the woods?"

"Yes."

"I was with David Hoffman. It is

the most wonderful country, a breathing space in the hills. Here he has established himself; and his dream is to induce other nervous invalids to join him and regain health. He has a house—a cabin, rather—and there he lives. He reads, studies, works, dissects symptoms and evolves theories; and not long ago he wrote me that he had about completed his investigations and was ready to seek converts."

"What is his theory?"

"That open air, the pure air of the wooded mountains and outdoor labor, will accomplish results that no medicine can. I was with him six weeks. I walked, worked in the garden, planted seeds, pulled up weeds, hoed the potato patch; and the physical exercise tired me so that I slept throughout the night, something I had not done in years, and awoke each morning to feel the wine of life coursing through my veins. The atmosphere is magical, and every breath brings healing."

"Henry"—Loring had listened with the deepest attention—"do you suppose Dr. Hoffman would take me up there?"

"You! Why, what ails you?"

"Don't you see how ill I am? Can't you notice the change?"

"You do look bad, but I thought—" Gray was a diffident man, and he was embarrassed. He knew of a reason for the alteration in Loring's looks, but he could not speak of it.

She appreciated his reticence, but she shook her head. "It is partly that and partly something else. I must get away, and when I spoke to Miriam she suggested perhaps Dr. Hoffman could help me. I am in great need, Henry, and if he is all you say he won't deny me. I should take a nurse so that I shouldn't be a great care, but I want the help I think he can give. Will you write to him?"

"I don't believe he's ever thought of taking women. It's a rough country." Gray could not see the reason for such a radical step.

"I don't mind that. If he is as good as you say, he won't deny comfort to a woman as wretched as I am." Her eyes filled with tears, and she seemed so ut-

terly despondent that Gray was alarmed. A weeping woman frightened him. Miriam never wept, and he promised anything to avert the threatened storm. That night he wrote to David Hoffman, making the letter a personal appeal, though, as he told his wife afterward, Loring's case did not seem to require such desperate measures.

"You don't understand," Miriam said, but she would not explain.

"Well, it seems a pity that she is to have a child after all, but it will be a comfort to her in the end." He was a good man but dull.

"Will it?" Miriam had no such faith. She tried to stifle the suspicion that would assert itself; she hoped that Loring would explain a matter that looked dubious; but when her friend still kept her own counsel, she hid her disappointment, and made up in gentleness for her harsh thought. She gave sympathy, though she was sore troubled at this new turn affairs had taken.

Loring, when her condition was no longer a matter of conjecture, acted in the only way possible. And the world was led to believe that Percy Bryce would have a posthumous heir. At times her soul revolted against the false position, but she saw that it was only by deception that she could preserve her secret. She divined Miriam's uneasiness, and she longed to tell her the truth, but in the end she decided to keep up the fiction with Miriam as well as with the outside world. She had not given the possibility that now existed a thought, but when she awoke to the consequences of her impulsive action she seemed to see in it a recompense. Gradually she realized that she would be able to bear Paul's loss when she cradled his child in her arms.

She had a desire to get away from the city, from the house filled with terrible memories. To her fevered imagination this David Hoffman, who was nursing his own quivering nerves back to a calm resumption of their duty, was the one person who could lay a quiet finger on her bruised spirit.

She arrived at Woodsmere at dusk, accompanied by Anne Worth. The little

station was deserted except for an old man in a faded uniform, and Loring was about to question him when there was a sound of horses' hoofs, and a moment later an old hack came into view drawn by an ancient steed. As the driver drew up to the platform, a man sprang out.

"Mrs. Bryce! This is the first day the train has been on time in a year. I apologize. Eben and I lingered on the way." His voice had a deep, resonant quality, and Loring forgot that she had been chilled at her forlorn reception.

She looked up into his blue eyes, set far back in his head and overhung with shaggy gray brows, and she trusted him. He was a tall man, slightly stooped and white-haired, but he gave less the impression of age than of one touched in his prime by advance frost.

"I am putting you up at my place," he said, as he led the way to the carriage. "We have no hotel accommodations, and everything is most primitive."

"I am not sure what that means, but the unknown cannot discourage me," Loring answered. "I camped out once in the Adirondacks."

"Over night?"

"For two days. We slept on pine boughs, and the guides cooked for us."

"Here you shall sleep in a house, and cook for yourselves—that is if you stay."

Miss Worth looked alarmed. She glanced involuntarily at Loring's fragile form, but Loring had no fears. They had vanished at the first touch of David Hoffman's hand.

"If you will let me stay, I should like a house of my own," she said.

"Wait till you see what we have to offer. Now look about you; I'm sure you have never seen a finer view."

They were climbing steadily, and he called their attention to the winding road, the river in the valley below, and the mountains rising one behind the other as far as the eye could reach. Loring drew deep breaths of content, and felt as if even in this brief space of time she were absorbing courage. The carriage stopped before a low one-storied house, and Hoffman helped them to de-

scend. Miss Worth gave a short exclamation of wonder, but Loring had no words. She was awed into silence by the grandeur of the scene. They had climbed steadily till now they were on a plateau almost at the top of a mountain, with a vista of hills rolling away in the distance. The autumn foliage was black against a velvet sky, more brilliant with stars than she had ever seen it. The grass plot in front of the house was covered with a yellow stubble, for it was drawing to the close of the year, and the vines that clambered up over the trellis-work of the small arbor were leafless. A few sturdy pines gave out their healthful fragrance. Loring sighed. Yes, here she might find peace, if she were ever to know it again.

David Hoffman watched his guest as she thrilled in response to the welcome nature gave, but when he saw her put up her hand to her eyes, he drew near.

"You will let me stay?" she said, an agony of longing in her voice.

For answer he held out both hands. "Why should I deny you? I, too, came here sick at heart, and I have found contentment. May you find it also, my child." Then he led her across the threshold of his house.

The door opened into a living room, running the width of the house. The walls were sealed with white pine; a huge fireplace of stones roughly put together with cement held long logs which blazed brightly in welcome, and gave out a resinous perfume that savored of the northern woods. There were comfortable chairs, a long pine table covered with books and magazines, and a couple of lamps burning acetylene gas lit up every nook and corner and banished shadows. Trophies of the chase adorned the walls, a moose head, antlers, mounted fish, a gun rack; and at one end, where a round table was daintily set for supper, there were a few good etchings. Loring's eye took in one detail after another, but her host interrupted her prolonged survey.

"Let me show you to your room; then we will have dinner."

The room which she was to share with Anne Worth was large and low-ceilinged.

It was plainly furnished but bright and clean. It was a white room; even the rugs before the beds were woven of white wool.

She made a slight change in her toilet and then went back to the living room.

It was a simple meal, simply served, but Loring enjoyed every mouthful. It seemed more appetizing than anything she had tasted in months.

Hoffman addressed his remarks impartially to her and to Anne Worth, but Loring was too tired to do more than reply in monosyllables. She sat back in her chair and studied her host. Seen in a strong light, the ravages of disease were marked. The blue veins at his temples stood out plainly, and suffering had drawn a network of tiny lines about his eyes. His frame was spare, and his hands were long and slender, the hands of an idealist. They came to mean much to her in the days that followed; their touch seemed to presage healing, and they fascinated her by their beauty, indicating the spirituality of the man's nature.

When she awoke next morning it was eight o'clock. Dr. Hoffman sent word to know if she preferred breakfasting in her room, but when she learned he had waited for her, she dressed quickly to join him.

At breakfast Hoffman was the same solicitous host. At first he would not listen to her plan of going out at once to select her future dwelling, but in the end he gave in and consented to show her the places nearby that were available. In the daylight the view from the doorstep was superb. It commanded a sweep of the broad valley, through which wound the silver stream of a little river; the mountain sides were red and yellow, for November had painted the trees with a lavish brush. A narrow footpath led from the Doctor's house to a cabin perched on a ledge several hundred feet higher up the mountain. Loring espied it. It was built of logs with an overhanging roof and deep set windows.

"I want that house!" she cried excitedly, pointing it out.

"Look at it first. There may be another better suited to your needs.

There was a colony of artists who came here once and started a cooperative settlement. That was in the days before the railroad came as far north as Woodsmere. To their minds the difficulties of getting supplies overbalanced the advantages of the place, so they abandoned it, and that is why you see several empty houses. The village lies below in the valley, and here and there scattered on the mountainside are the lumbermen's huts. They are rough but kind-hearted; you will be perfectly safe. If you want the house after you go through it, I will arrange matters for you."

They were walking toward the cottage, but Loring was impatient. "I know I shall take it," she said decisively.

"Do you always choose on impulse?"

"I'm afraid I do." And though his question had been half banter, her reply was serious.

But this time a closer inspection of the thing desired only deepened her longing for possession. The interior was roughly sealed to keep out the winds; the rooms were small but square, and the living room had a deep fireplace. The living room could be hung with chintz and made most attractive, and the fireplace, with its ingle nook, would be an ideal spot in which to dream away the evening hours. From the west window she got the same outlook over the valley and the distant mountains as from the Doctor's doorstep, and she stood for a time gazing out with eyes that drank in the beauty of the scene.

"I've decided. I'll write Mrs. Gray tonight to send up what I need. In the meantime, while I'm settling, I'll be a pensioner on your bounty."

And so, while her nest in the hills, as she termed it, was being made ready for her, she lived in David Hoffman's house, and laid the foundation of the sincerest friendship of her life. The days passed rapidly, for she was busy, and Hoffman's companionship made her open up the storehouse of her mind and dig up forgotten lore. His keen mentality stimulated her, and made her realize that in her world one side of her nature had lain dormant. She had thought that Paul

Redding's love had brought her to the fullness of her womanhood, but now she knew that even love had left her brain torpid. And it was this brain that David Hoffman was reaching. He was helping her in a way she had never dreamed of. She had come to Woodsmere thinking nature would bring peace to her heart and forgetfulness to her mind, but Hoffman taught her that only mental activity could drive away the specter of her sorrow. He gave her books to read; he talked to her of scientific discoveries; he interested her in his own projected work, and he appealed to her reason as if he could count upon it. He talked to her of the people around them—the men away on their perilous trips down the river for weeks at a time, the women pinched with poverty and prematurely aged by toil and hardship, and the children, like young hawks, keen-eyed, bronzed and shy. At first when they saw her coming they would hide in the woods; afterward they lost their fear. And it was through the children that David Hoffman reached her soul.

VII

HE gathered the children at his house once a week to teach them the elements of knowledge. Loring happened in one day and stopped to listen. It seemed wonderful to her that a man of his attainments should consider this worth his while, but he was as patient with the stammering, awkward boy who could not remember seven times nine as he was with her who could not comprehend Nietzsche. She seated herself quietly near the window and studied the man and the childish forms gathered around him. There were twelve in all, poorly clad, with sharp, pinched features and rough, red hands. The boys had an eager, strained look; the girls were self-conscious at her presence, but to Hoffman these wisps of humanity were beings with souls, and his all-embracing charity went out to give them of his intellectual wealth. Loring pitied their human needs, and wondered if she might offer to send for warm clothing.

She thought their lack of the multiplication table less urgent than woollen underclothing and mittens. After the lesson there were cups of hot cocoa and thick slices of bread and butter, and Loring asked herself if the reward at the end were not back of the willingness to accept a weekly course of instruction. Then she was ashamed of her skepticism for she knew it was the master's strong personality that held the attention of these children of the wilds, as it held her own. After the first visit she came again, and as Christmas was drawing near, she questioned if she might give them a tree, with substantial gifts. "For the sake of the child who is coming into my own life," she explained, while her features softened with tenderness.

Hoffman gazed at her steadily. He knew that a deeper trouble lay back of the apparent one. She never spoke of Percy Bryce, yet he divined it was not sorrow at her husband's death that drove her to a refuge in the mountains. He never questioned her about her life. At first their relations were those of physician and patient; then the friendship that was to endure beyond all else sprang up between them, and made confidence, so far as he was concerned, unnecessary. Her joy in her approaching motherhood was very real. Her fingers, which till now had never learned to handle a needle, were busy for hours over fine bits of cambric and lace which Anne was teaching her to fashion into tiny garments. As the weeks passed she became less dependent and learned to do for herself. She even occupied herself in homely household tasks, so that she should keep active and take exercise, even when the weather was too severe for her to be abroad. The snow came in the night, and covered the earth with a blanket of fleece. The shallow river was frozen over, and winter held the countryside in a grasp which would not loosen until spring.

Miriam wrote: "Are you sure you can stand four months of bitter cold weather? Don't you think it would be wiser for you to return now?" And she answered: "The cold seems to be the tonic I needed. If you doubt, come and

see for yourself. Yesterday it snowed all day, and I swept and dusted my room; then Anne taught me to make a delicious pudding. This morning, when Eben—the man who does our chores, delivers our milk and brings the mail—came to dig us out, I took a wooden shovel and helped clear the path. Dr. Hoffman, coming up to see how we had fared, caught me at my task, and said I worked so well that he'd like to engage me to clear away his snow. Frankly, Miriam, I'm getting close to nature, and as I never craved people the way most women do, I'm nearer to happiness than I expected."

Dr. Hoffman came that morning to discuss plans for the Christmas party, and together they made out a list of things she was to send for. Coats, dresses, suits, sweaters and toys, sleds, skates and dolls, boxes of candy and fruit.

"You will spoil them for the simpler pleasures that will come after," he chided gently, but made no effort to check her enthusiasm.

"Don't you think one party is little enough to look back upon? Their gray childhood is entitled to one day of sunshine, and I don't intend it shall be the last. I shall give them a party every year; it will be my thank offering."

Eben cut the tree, a huge fir that reached from the floor to the ceiling, a proud king of the forest that extended a hundred arms in a silent benediction. When it was placed in position Loring clapped her hands delightedly.

"Anne—I am going to call you Anne from today, and you shall call me Loring, otherwise I shall forget I have a front name—Anne, it is the most beautiful tree in the world!"

Anne Worth raised her head. She was on her knees, trimming the lowest branches. An expression of sympathy made her plain face almost lovely. "It surely is the most beautiful tree I've ever seen, because of what it represents," she said softly.

"Wall," Eben added his voice in critical judgment, "there ain't a finer one in the hull woods; and when the kids sees it, they'll whoop. The Doc had one

last year, but shucks, it couldn't hold a candle to this!"

Loring frowned anxiously. "I don't want to dim the Doctor's glory," she said. What if in her desire to serve she had been overzealous and had wounded his feelings?

Eben shook his head. "You couldn't do that, Mis' Bryce. You're new, but the Doc, he's one of us."

But after Eben had gone Loring sat in her favorite seat in the ingle nook, an open book in her lap, her eyes however fixed on the firelight, not on the printed page.

"Have I been selfish, Anne? Have I usurped one of the Doctor's prerogatives? Perhaps, in my desire to do something for these poor children, I have hurt him. He is too kind to tell me so, but suppose unconsciously I have wounded his feelings!"

"I'm sure you haven't," said Anne. "I think his pleasure in seeing you do something for his people would outweigh any personal consideration he might have in the matter. Besides, you are a woman whose motives men never quarrel with."

"What do you mean by that?" Loring sat up, prepared to enjoy a discussion. "I mean there are certain women who do things so gracefully that a man is glad to have them do them."

"You flatter, instead of explain."

"I don't flatter you. I'm sure, all your life, men have been glad for what you've done for them; they have never questioned your motives."

"I wonder if you are right?" Loring sighed. Her mind went back to those San Francisco days. She had acted on impulse then, her one desire being for a sight of Paul's face, for the sound of his voice, for the touch of his hand. What these things had led to had been a natural result of her imprudence; she admitted that now; but the end had not been in her mind when she had planned her hurried trip across the continent. The love between them, repressed, beaten back, held under restraint for years, had flamed into passion at that first meeting, and she had gone to his arms and found comfort in them. Had

Paul ever questioned her motive in going to him? Had he ever thought she had deliberately planned to make him false to his word, to undermine Agnes's influence, to put him so wholly in her debt that his first duty would be to her? Or was Anne right; had he forgotten to look for a motive in the completeness of her self-surrender?

"Will you have tea now?" Anne's voice recalled her to the present.

Loring came out of her communion with the past, her eyes holding sacred memories. Then she smiled. "I had forgotten you, Anne, but not your words; they started a train of thought that took me so far away I was lost for a while. I hope you are right, and that I shall not be judged for a motive that must have existed, though I was too careless to perceive it. Impulse is a mantle of charity, invented, I believe, for women like myself. Tea? Yes, but let me make it today. Poor Anne, you must be tired; you've worked so hard, and you never will confess to fatigue."

VIII

THE Christmas party led to other things. In the first place, it broke down the barrier of reserve between Loring and the children; in the second it showed her that the girls needed something Hoffman could not teach, a certain feminine instruction which she, with Anne's aid, was prepared to give. Hoffman listened to her argument.

"Let me teach them domestic economy. Don't smile; you know the wastefulness of the poor. I have heard it discussed from the lecture platform, and now I have seen it demonstrated. They know nothing of cooking; they fry everything; their sewing is wretched. I want to teach them to make their homes attractive, really to understand personal cleanliness, so that they will grow up to healthier, broader lives than their mothers live."

"Can you teach?"

Loring was thoughtful for a moment. "I think I can. There is a crying need in me which must be expressed. I am

woefully ignorant, but Anne is patient; see what I have learned to do for myself in these few months! And surely what I have learned I can teach others. Self-respect, self-reliance, those are beautiful lessons."

"But do you feel strong enough to undertake this work? You should not begin unless you are willing to carry it through."

Loring laughed. "Strong! I think I never knew what a healthy body meant till I came here. I have gained so much. Help me to do something for these poor children who have so little."

Hoffman understood this need of activity, which made her reach out and long to help. Had it not come to him when nature's healing hand touched the sore spot in his spirit, and returning health made him eager to assist others? So he gave a willing ear to her plans, and personally persuaded the mothers, who were inclined to look askance at the *ménage* on the hill, to allow their daughters to go to the stranger for instruction. As Eben said, they knew and loved the Doctor, but they looked with suspicion upon this strange woman, and up till now resisted all her efforts to reach a friendly basis. The Doctor had extended the invitations to the Christmas party and it was more to please him than anything else that the children had been allowed to attend. Loring's generous gifts had not elicited gratitude; they were accepted in sullen silence by the parents, who were almost distrustful in the face of unsolicited favor. Dr. Hoffman listened to their murmurings, but he smoothed them over, and in the end he won a reluctant consent to Loring's offer.

But before she could teach she had to learn, and she applied herself to acquiring a knowledge of household tasks with her oldtime enthusiasm. She gained an elasticity of spirit in the weeks that followed, and learned to carry her mental burden with perfect poise. She went ahead rapidly, ignoring Anne's advice to be cautious. She forgot that the minds she was dealing with were virgin soil, fields which had never been ploughed, and were not ready to be sown with fine corn.

"Go easy, Mrs. Bryce, go easy," Anne warned.

"How can I! Don't you see that their starved little souls drink up my words as thirsty plants drink water? Why, they know nothing, absolutely nothing!"

"For that reason don't overcrowd their heads, otherwise they'll jumble together what you teach, and won't be able to make practical use of their lessons. What was the sense of asking Nora Torby if she'd like a sewing machine? She'd never heard of one; and do you suppose your explanation conveyed an exact impression to her mind?"

"Anne, you make me feel very small. I do want to help these people; I have so much and they have so little. Why, Anne, it isn't six months since I spoke of trying to live on ten thousand a year, and wondering if I could do it without feeling the pressing finger of poverty. I had been accustomed to spend so much more while Mr. Bryce lived that this sum seemed paltry, and now I feel rich, so rich that I can give abundantly. It has been a lesson in comparative values. Nora is fifteen; she is very pretty; she is more intelligent than the others; why shouldn't she have a sewing machine if I can well afford to give it to her?" Loring paused a moment and waited for Anne's approbation, but that was not forthcoming.

"What will she do with it?"

"Learn to sew, and perhaps do dress-making."

"For whom?"

"Anne, you are incorrigible. Do you suppose a girl like Nora is going to spend the rest of her life in these mountains? In time she will drift to the village. I know the mountain people think it a wicked place, but it is really very tame and very attractive."

"Don't try to interfere with these people's lives."

"Very well, you may be right; I give in; and you have my permission to hold me in check every time I show signs of wanting to gallop." Loring submitted gracefully. Anne had sprung from mountain people herself.

But even then the mischief had been done, and an angry father was on his way

to Hoffman with a distorted version of Loring's teachings.

"It ain't decent. It's a leadin' of my girl astray, tellin' her to let her hair curl, and to pick out colors as'll match her skin! They ain't the ideas to put into the heads of honest, God fearin' girls! Askin' Nora would she like a sewin' machine!" Torby's wrath exploded. He was a tall, gaunt man with fierce eyes and a bitter line about his mouth.

"Mrs. Bryce means well," Hoffman began, but Torby would not be appeased.

"Nora goes no more to her house. Ain't we got to guard against the temptations of the town?" He referred to the village in the valley, a mile away. "How can we do that if there's an enemy in our midst?"

"She is trying to be your friend. You don't know what a sewing machine means to a woman; it cuts her labor in half."

"Givin' her time to get into mischief! No, Doc, keep 'em busy and you keep 'em safe. Idleness ain't for the poor."

Hoffman climbed the hill the next morning, sorely perplexed. He must warn Loring that she was taking the wrong course with these people; yet he knew she looked upon her work in the light of a crusade; and she was beginning to experience the zeal of a reformer. It would hurt her to be told, no matter how adroitly he handled the subject.

It was a mild February day, a fore-runner of spring, when the winter landscape gave contradiction to the mellow atmosphere. He found her out of doors, brushing the snow from the roots of the clinging vines that in summer would cover one side of the house. A long fur coat reached to her boot tops; a fur hood tied under her chin framed her glowing face, and her hands were encased in fleece-lined mittens. She turned as she heard his footsteps crunching on the path.

"What a day! It makes me glad to be alive. There is quicksilver in the air, and I am taking long breaths of it. Do you want to go indoors? Are you tired? Now that I look at you, I don't believe

you slept last night. What was it, work or worry? Here am I bubbling over with more health than I need; if I could only give you some of it!" She went up to him swiftly, and laid her hand on his arm.

He looked down at her with friendly eyes. "I am stronger than I have been in years, but you are right: I am tired this morning."

"Come indoors, then. Anne shall make you one of her famous milk punches. We can have a long talk, and you shall tell me all your worries."

He smiled at her authoritative tone, but did not protest as she took possession of him and led him indoors where a log fire burned in the grate, its cheerful blaze inviting confidences. When she had given him the most comfortable chair the room contained, Loring seated herself beside him on a low stool.

"First I want to speak to you about something. Anne has been lecturing me. She says the people here won't understand, and I may do harm where I want to do good. Is that possible?"

Hoffman sipped from the glass in his hand. She was providing the opening he desired. "Quite." He spoke decisively. "Motives are easy to misunderstand, when approached from opposite viewpoints."

"But do two people ever have exactly the same viewpoint? Don't we always have to make allowance for the difference in temperament?" She was suddenly anxious.

"You are begging the question, which is: Do these people misunderstand what you are doing for them?"

"Well, do they?"

"Yes."

"Oh!" she cried out. The truth hurt more than he imagined it would. "And I was innocent. In the beginning I wanted to please you, after—because I saw their terrible need." She was trying to defend her position, to set herself right in his eyes.

"Couldn't you do it without letting them know that you saw their ignorance?"

"What have I done?" Now she was more than anxious; she was afraid.

"How do you think it will help Nora Torby to let her hair curl and to wear becoming clothes?"

"Ah, I am beginning to see. It is my teaching that the body is a possession to be cared for, that our personal appearance affects our mode of thought, which is at fault."

"Do you know Jim Torby?"

"I have seen him, a grim, prematurely aged man, who looks as if the food of the world had given him indigestion."

"He is one of the few bigoted men in the neighborhood, but his zeal is so intense that his neighbors respect and look up to him. The others might let you do for their daughters unquestioningly, but Torby is of another way of thinking. He has a Puritanical strain that makes him despise physical attractiveness, and see in it only a snare set by the Evil One. Were it not for Nora's mother, he would have the child wear her hair cropped close like a boy's."

"And I have tried to awaken her vanity—she has such pretty hair! Of course he won't let her have the sewing machine. Will he take her out of my class?"

"So he says now, but if you drop these revolutionary teachings till the girls are fit to receive them, she may come back. I don't want you to offend Jim; in his rude way he is a power, and his stand may influence others."

"He is quite honest in his opinions?"

"I have found him so. His character is uncompromising, narrow but sincere. I don't believe he'd lie under any circumstances."

Loring moved restlessly. "Is a lie the greatest sin in the world? Aren't there times when it is not only pardonable but justifiable?"

"Polite; society fictions?"

"No, a plain lie, carefully thought out and nurtured to perfection."

"Such a lie is bound to corrupt the originator. Truth is nature's friend; a lie is her enemy."

"Beautifully said; I wonder if you really mean it? I beg your pardon—I did not intend to be rude—but you have lived in the world, you know men and women of the world. Haven't you ever known of a circumstance when the truth

would do more harm than the most flagrant lie?"

Her warmth betrayed a deeper interest in the question than idle argument. Hoffman knew she was asking because she had the knowledge of some such lie. Why had it been told—why nurtured? Was she trying to find some excuse for herself, or for another? It was not Jim Torby's attitude in the matter that made her clench her hands nervously, that made her lips tremble; it was something nearer. Hoffman had always been a student of human nature, and from the beginning he knew that this woman had gone through some grave experience. She spoke freely of herself, but had told little, clothing her confidences in generalities. He was puzzled for an answer.

"That is sophistry. The truth is not always pretty, but it is clean; and we must purge our souls of lies before we can hold up our heads and look God in the face."

But Loring did not hold up her head. She let it sink lower, when he had gone, while her shoulders drooped in dejection. She wondered miserably what Hoffman would say if she opened her heart to him, confessed that she was about to dedicate the rest of her life to a lie. Was he right—would it corrupt her little by little, till she could no longer distinguish things fairly? Would it be better to say: "My child has no father that he can claim," than to shroud his parentage in her first husband's memory?

She dared not put him to the test now—he looked too sad, too weary; but she suddenly became conscious that she could not keep him in ignorance as she had planned. It seemed as if it had become his right to know. Suppose, knowing, he should withdraw his friendship from her and send her back to the city she had come to loathe? If he did, she could not protest; she had concealed the truth from him, and though he might not judge her harshly, he would judge her firmly. The desire to confide in him, to ease part of the burden that oppressed her soul by confession, grew; and a day or two later, as she stood by the window watching the sun

sink slowly behind the mountain tops, she made up her mind to go to him. She was lonely; she needed a keener intellectual companionship than Anne Worth could give; she wanted David Hoffman's virile mentality to brace her own; she must wipe the page between them clean, so that in future they could talk freely.

"I am going down to Dr. Hoffman's," she said.

The Doctor's insight had warned him of an approaching crisis, and he was not surprised when Loring's knock sounded at his door. She came in, her cheeks flushed with health, her eyes dark with excitement. The sharp wind had blown little wisps of hair from under her fur cap, and she put up her hands to smooth her disordered locks. She looked young, almost girlish, as she stood in front of the small mirror that hung between the windows, but Hoffman saw that it was nervousness, not vanity, that kept her fussing over her appearance.

"Now I look less like a wild woman," she said, turning to face him.

He pushed forward a chair, and she sank into it gratefully. She was suddenly tired, physically as well as morally, for until she sat in his room she had not realized the strain of her long struggle. It would be a relief to get the matter threshed out between them. Her beginning was abrupt.

"You have taught me to strengthen my body; you have taught me to exercise my mind. Now what will you do for my soul? I have done wrong according to your code; I have been a brigand in love, and yet I am not repentant—I am only tired of bearing my burden alone."

"You think it will make things easier if you confide in me?"

"Yes; so I am going to tell you the story of a woman who led a colorless life up to a certain point. Then chance threw a moment's happiness into her path, and she opened her arms to it."

IX

For a long time after she had finished her story, Loring sat and stared into the fire, waiting for Hoffman's verdict.

To him her tale had been a great surprise. He had been sure that it was no ordinary trouble which drove her to him; he had grasped the fact that she had never loved her husband, and that perhaps some other man's image filled her heart; but that, being legally married to the father of her child, she could plan such an elaborate scheme of deception for his sake was astounding. Here was an example of that rare love that gives all, even to renunciation. Having convinced herself that an establishment of her claim would lead to his disgrace, she had resolved upon a sacrifice which would keep his name stainless. Hoffman saw that she gloried in her ability to give this supreme test of her love. "Not what I want, but what is best for him," she said, and her face softened as she said it. She would devote the rest of her life to the little one whose coming was to be her recompense. Ah, yes, she suffered now, but surely in time her pain would be less, and Redding's memory would become a gentle sorrow, not an ache.

The question of Agnes—whether it was fair to her to let her occupy a position not legally hers, never occurred to Loring, though it did to Hoffman—not only then, but later, when the tangled lives of the three crossed again. But it was not counsel she asked for; it was sympathy. She had confessed, not because she felt in need of advice, but because her secret cast a shadow of restraint over the most perfect friendship of her life, and before the hour of her trial came, she wished to clear up the mystery between them. Ethically he might disapprove of her action, might say it was quixotic, but in his heart he would understand, for this was the sort of thing he himself was capable of. As she revealed more and more of her inmost thought, as she let him peer into the dim recess where she had stored her romance, he saw the heart hunger of the woman, and realized that if she had adopted a predatory course in satisfying an underlying need of her nature, it was because that nature was an unusual one. The question in her eyes was not: "What do you think of my story?" but "Will

you take your friendship from me because I am living that thing which you abhor, a lie?" And it was this appeal which he answered. When he spoke it was not to criticise, but to give her the sympathy she craved. Gravely he counseled her to let her grief add to her spiritual nature. His large charity made him pity her for the false situation she was creating for herself; he foresaw that trouble would come of it sooner or later, and he set himself to the task of preparing her to meet it.

"You won't let this make any difference?" she asked. "I had to tell you, but you are the only one who knows; I couldn't even confide in Miriam."

"When our friends are in trouble, they need us most."

"That means I am still your friend?"

He reassured her, and they talked on in low tones till Eben, who was to see her back to the cottage, began to shuffle about impatiently in the kitchen.

Loring heard him. "I was never taught to consider my inferiors, but you and Anne are teaching me that each individual has rights the rest of us should respect. Eben is hinting that I should be going." She rose as she spoke, and began to put on her wraps.

"You learn so rapidly that you will soon outstrip your instructors."

"There is little danger of that, my friend; and yet it is only lately that I have learned the power of my own personality."

"You have a strong soul, and a strong soul works out its own salvation."

"What do you mean by that?"

"Think it over; the solution will come to you. You see, I have no doubts."

"I wish I had none. Good night."

Anne met her on the doorstep. "You were so late, I was beginning to fear something had happened."

"Something has happened to me, Anne. The physician is curing my soul as well as my body; he has laid the hand of healing on my sick heart, and I shall soon be made whole." She spoke softly, still under the influence of Hoffman's tenderness.

Long after Anne had tucked her into bed like a sleepy child, she lay staring

into the darkness, pondering over his words, and wondering if she had caught his meaning aright. What salvation must she work out for herself to prove the strength of her soul?

The days passed quickly. A thaw set in and the roads were almost impassable. Loring kept closely to the house, and took her exercise on the half-acre belonging to her property. The little girls came to her once a week, and after a time, Nora reappeared, shy and uncomfortable, as if she expected to be chided for her absence; but Loring had learned her lesson.

"I shall not interfere. She shall wear purples that kill her delicate coloring, and shapeless garments that hide her slim figure; but if her father thinks he can stave off the day when she will become conscious of her good looks, he is mistaken. Don't frown, Anne; in spite of your Southern birth, you are a Puritan at heart, and you think Nora will be better off if she never learns how pretty she is."

Miriam wrote: "Are you quite comfortable? Hasn't it been a dreadful winter? Don't you want me to come to you for a few weeks? Frances is engaged. Her fiancé is a nice boy, and they openly adore each other. She is content to stay at home once in a while and let her family see how charming she is, so, if you wish, I can get away with an easy conscience."

But Loring had no need of her now. She had Anne in the house and Hoffman near by, and her life was full of incident.

Spring came with a rush. The snow melted rapidly, and one morning Loring awoke to find Anne standing at the foot of her bed with a handful of crocuses.

"The Doctor's greeting, to tell you we have seen the last of winter."

Loring sat up. "Give them to me." She held out her slender hands cup fashion, and Anne dropped the yellow and white blossoms into her palms. "Spring brings us a new lease of life. How glad I am my baby will be a springtime child!" she said softly.

The first wood violets almost made her wild with joy. She gathered them herself, and kept them until they lost their

beauty as well as their fragrance. She spent hours in the woods, damp with earthy odors, yet full of new life, for the sap ran in the trees, tender green shoots sprang up, and vines wound themselves around the trunks and gnarled roots of fallen timber. There were quantities of green moss everywhere. Below in the valley the river, released from its icy bondage, rippled noisily over the stones, chattering of the glories it was to view on its way to the inland sea. Eben brought her delicious trout from mountain brooks. Nature, after lying quiescent for months, her head shrouded in a mantle of snow, now awoke eager to perform her tasks. Birds built their nests, laid their eggs and brought forth their young; newborn calves bleated in the cowsheds; a long-legged colt trotted beside its proud mother in the pasture below. Nature was teaching the earth to reproduce, and the stir of newborn things was in the air.

Now that the seal was removed from Loring's lips, she sought Hoffman daily, and talked to him of any matter uppermost in her mind.

"Let us walk to the topmost clearing; I want to fill my eyes with a golden sunset. I think, as each day dies, tomorrow can never be so beautiful; and yet each morning is ushered in with the same pale rose tints to promise another day of perfection. Will it be too much of a climb for you?" She paused and surveyed her companion solicitously, but he laughed at her fears.

"Tonight I feel the vigor of a young man coursing through my veins. Spring has got into my blood and made me forget I ever faced death."

Loring shivered. "Don't speak of death tonight. Let us talk of life, a life like yours, full of good deeds. Some people can't be spared and you are one of them."

"No one is indispensable in the scheme of creation. When one tree in the forest falls, another springs up to take its place. When a man's time comes, there are always half a dozen of his fellows ready to step into the vacancy."

He held the gate open and she passed

through; then he fell into step at her side, and they sauntered slowly along the path which led through the clearing, to a broad plateau, from which they could command a sweep of the whole surrounding country.

"Do you make light of the work you plan to do?"

"No; and I hope I shall live long enough to carry it through."

"Why don't you begin now? You have only to show yourself to induce others to follow you."

"You have faith in me, but the world still doubts."

"How long have you had this idea?"

"That the worst forms of nervous diseases could be healed by a life in the open air, that a body wearied by toil is a better inducement to slumber than any sedative? It has come to me since I have seen the results in my own case. You know, I practised on Henry Gray and another man whom I inveigled up here, on false pretenses, as he said—but he stayed with me four months, and went back cured."

Loring led him on to speak of his hobby, offering a suggestion now and then. She knew what the active life he prescribed had done for her. It was not only the quiet of the place, the wonderfully bracing atmosphere, but the daily tasks he exacted that had helped her to regain her mental balance, and had kept her mind contented as well as her body healthy. Hoffman dreamed of gathering the nerve sick from the city, bringing them to this mountain solitude, teaching them a new interpretation of life and making them work their way back to health. The dream grew, and as it grew the possibility of fulfillment loomed upon the horizon.

"It is genius," said Loring; "and genius is creative force."

"Yes, and like nature, I shall create new bodies out of old waste."

They came into the open suddenly and Loring drew a long breath, awed by the majesty and splendor of the view. In silence they watched the sun sinking to rest between a gap in the mountains. The whole atmosphere was bathed in a golden light. Then, as they watched,

the sun dropped from sight, the afterglow faded slowly, the violet changed to palest lavender, the heavy clouds gathered darkly, and the air became heavy with night odors. Loring drew her light shawl closer about her shoulders.

"Shall we go now?" Hoffman said, marveling at the glory of her transfigured face. She reminded him of the portrait of an early saint. Flesh had given way to spirituality. She had communed for months with nature; the long white silences had taught her mystery; the woods had whispered courage; the mountains abiding faith, and no matter where she would go when the time came for her to take her departure she would never entirely shake off the influence of these days when her soul had been stripped naked, and she stood face to face with natural truths.

They walked back in silence. They had progressed in friendship far beyond the stage when words were necessary to mutual understanding.

And the next morning, when the sun climbed to the top of the hill and peeped over into their part of the world, Loring's son was born.

X

A MONTH later she received a long letter from Miriam. Frances's engagement was broken, and the child pined to get away from her fellow creatures. Would Loring take her? Loring sent back a cordial invitation, and Frances came to the "top of the world," as she afterward described Woodsmere. The girl was as colorless as a lily, her dark eyes were tragic with trouble; her exquisite mouth drooped piteously, and her abundant dark hair framed a face stamped with youth's first great sorrow.

Anne Worth met her at the station.

"And Cousin Loring and the baby? Oh, Miss Worth, isn't it wonderful that this joy should come into her life when she needs it most? I never knew Cousin Percy well, but she seems to have grieved so for his death." And Frances's eyes filled with tears. She was remembering her own sorrow.

"I guess Mrs. Bryce is finding the comfort she needs in her son."

"Is he pretty? Does he look like her? Cousin Percy was pasty-faced and he had light eyebrows."

"He is a handsome child; but babies change from day to day, and just now he looks like any other healthy youngster of his age." Anne was noncommittal. Royall Bryce certainly did not resemble the description of his father.

Dr. Hoffman came out to bid the young stranger welcome. He had gained noticeably that spring; a fine color tinted his thin cheeks, and he held his head erect. Frances gazed at him with awe. This was the great surgeon who had been forced out of the arena while still a man in his prime! But at his first words of simple friendliness she lost her fear, and he sent her on her way feeling that she had made a friend.

Loring stood at the threshold, holding out her arms. With a sob Frances hid her face on her cousin's shoulder.

"Cousin Loring, you are good to have me. I am so wretched, so unhappy!" she said.

"Hush, darling; no one is unhappy here for long; there is something in the air that heals sorrow as well as sickness. Now come and see my boy!" She led the way indoors to the cradle where the child lay. Frances bent over him, and he stared up at her with great, solemn eyes. She dropped on her knees beside the wooden cot.

"Oh, you blessed, blessed baby! Isn't he a darling!" she cried rapturously.

"We think he is; and he is such a good baby." Loring's pride rang in her voice. "Now I'll show you to your room, and you can make yourself comfortable. You won't find any luxuries, dear—perhaps you'll think you even lack necessities; but we learn to do without when we must. I added these two rooms myself; one is the day nursery, the other the guest chamber."

She threw open a door leading from the living room and ushered Frances into a small, square chamber. The walls were covered with a gaily patterned chintz; fishnet curtains hung at the wide window; the dressing table and tall

chest of drawers, of native manufacture were painted white; the chairs had chintz cushions and the bedspread matched the hangings. Everything was roughly made, but the place had a home-like air that brought a lump to the girl's throat.

"Do you like it? Anne and I did it all." Loring gave Frances a chance to regain her self-control.

"I'm afraid I've given you a lot of trouble."

"It's been such fun. No one is allowed to be idle here. You shall choose tomorrow just what you want to do, but you won't be allowed to sit in your room and think," Loring said; and she kept her word.

Frances, who had been brought up to play the indolent role of a beauty, learned to sweep and dust, to lay the table and to clean the silver; but her fondness for outdoors led Loring to put her in charge of the kitchen garden, and there she displayed real talent. Her delight in the growing greens was almost childlike, and she tended the young shoots with solicitous care. When they finally began to bear, she waxed enthusiastic.

"I shall never be able to eat a tomato; I feel as if I knew each one personally," she said to Hoffman, with whom she was soon on terms of intimacy. "I've counted them so often, I know them now by their numbers. No. 12 is the fattest, juiciest rascal you ever saw. He is round and green, without a speck of any kind, and this morning I'm sure he was ashamed of getting so far ahead of the others, for I found he was blushing. And No. 24 is so tiny; I fear she'll never grow up to be a dignified lady tomato."

Hoffman laughed. "The romance of a tomato patch! Well, I have no scruples, so when No. 12 reaches the right shade of red and is ready to pick, bring him to me, and I'll prepare a well-seasoned dressing and eat him with relish."

"Cannibal! Haven't even the green things life?"

"Yes, but we need their life to sustain our own."

Frances dropped her work in her lap; she was hemming dish towels, and gazed into space. "Just as some human beings exist through the vitality of others. I've seen that in my own family; we all lean on my mother. She has wonderful force; she is not a large woman, yet she impresses you as such. Even father asks her advice and abides by her decisions. When I came away, they were talking over father's new position. The company wanted—to send him to Washington, but he would not accept unless mother approved of the change."

"How do you feel about it?"

"I am glad. Washington must be the nearest approach to an ideal city that we have."

Loring, entering at the moment caught her cousin's phrase. "I should like to live in Washington," she said.

"Then why not come with us?"

"I'll think about it. I've been there only on flying visits, but I have a memory of cool, shaded streets, many parks and a well dressed, leisure class of people who stopped to admire as they journeyed on."

Hoffman glanced at her. "You are planning to leave Woodsmere?" There was deep regret in his voice. For years he had schooled himself to bear the loneliness of his lot, to seek mental companionship in books, forgetfulness of self in work and relief from tedium in interesting himself in the lives of the poor; but for nearly a year he had enjoyed the intellectual society of a well-bred woman who had a keen mind and a vivid mentality, and he would feel his isolation more than ever when she went away.

Loring's heart throbbed gratefully as she recognized what her departure would mean to him. "I shall not go until winter; and I shall keep my little house and come back to it often. I have learned to live here, and I must return in spring to renew my intercourse with nature. Besides, I want Royall to love it as I love it, and I shall come back for his sake as well as for my own." Her voice brimmed over with tenderness as she mentioned her son. She had given him her mother's maiden name. She cared for him herself, almost jealous of Anne's

interference, and happiest of all when he slept in her arms and she could feast her eyes for hours on his small face.

From the service journals she learned that Redding was still in the East. She read his name and that of Agnes among the list of guests at various functions in Manila, so that she knew he was well, and, outwardly at least, resigned to his fate. She tried to picture his emotion should he ever see Royall, but, though she dwelt many times on the joy of laying the child in his father's arms, she had no intention of departing from her original purpose. There was no need of turning the knife in the wound. It would never heal in her breast, but it might in his; and she told herself she had no need of Paul now when he lived again, more her own than ever, in the person of his son.

Frances stayed throughout the summer, but it was not until the night before the girl went home that her lips were unsealed and she told the story of her lover's perfidy. She had liked him from the beginning of their acquaintance, and as he was a young man with a good future, her parents put no obstacle in the way of his wooing. He was an ardent suitor, and it was not long before he declared himself and she was very happy. But after he had won her promise he grew lax in his attentions, and she heard rumors of his devotion to a stage favorite. She did not believe it till one evening, when she had gone to the theater with her parents, she saw him coming out of a restaurant with the woman. He had turned and met her eye, but she had stared at him as if she were seeing a stranger. He made an effort to explain later, but she asked him only to assure her on one point. Did he consider what he offered was the love that would make for a happy marriage? And, to his credit, he could not brazen it out.

"I did right to send him away, Cousin Loring. I've seen too much misery follow when girls insist upon marrying men who want only heads for their households, not wives. You see, father and mother are so companionable that I've grown up to believe that the true foundation for married happiness. I don't want to

marry a man, and after a month or two seek my own interests while he seeks his. I want my husband's way to be my way; I want to care for the things he cares for. Spencer liked books and pictures and motor cars. I liked them also, and I thought we had many tastes in common; but I could not share him with other women, and I did not wish to marry a man who was willing to leave my entertainment to other men. You understand me, don't you?" Frances asked the question abruptly. Loring was so silent that the girl feared she had gone too much into detail, but Loring promptly reassured her.

"You are quite right, Frances. Wait until the man you love wants a wife in every meaning of the word; then accept him—but not till then, for the woman who belies her nature will pay for it with tears and misery, with rebellion and perhaps sin." Frances shuddered and crept into Loring's arms.

When Frances had gone, Loring missed her more than she cared to admit. Her affectionate ways, her quaint speech, her quiet humor after she had resolutely buried her sorrow out of sight, had brightened the long summer days, and given the shut-in woman a taste of the outer world that had once been breath to her nostrils. One day she awoke to the fact that she was ready to leave her nest in the mountains.

The Grays went to Washington in October. They found a cheery, old-fashioned brick house, fronting one of the numerous parks, and were deep in the fascinating labor of turning four walls into a home. The home adjoining was also to let, and though smaller, had the advantage of a garden with four trees. Miriam mentioned the fact, and Loring wrote by return mail to secure the refusal of it. She would look at it herself in a few days.

She planned to make a hurried trip to Washington, see the house and if she liked it, arrange to have her furniture, now stored in New York, sent on and placed before she brought the baby down from Woodsmere.

"You will watch over him," she said to Hoffman, as he drove with her to the

station. "I know Anne will be as faithful in her care as I would be, yet I shall feel better if you see him every day."

And Hoffman promised gladly. The child was dear to him, and he almost rivaled the women in their slavish devotion and absurd pride. He accepted Loring's statement that there never had been such another child and gravely subscribed to it. The little fingers twined about his, and it seemed as if they put forth tendrils that reached to his heart.

Loring passed through New York from one station to another, and was surprised to find she had so little interest in her native town. Her saddest memories gathered here, and she had no desire to revisit scenes that could only call up old regrets.

The Washington house, of red brick with trimmings of white stone, was quaint and full of possibilities. The rooms were large and sunny, and a bow window looked out over fifty feet of lawn where the four trees, still green and leafy, stood in state.

Miriam watched her cousin's face, and had no doubts.

"I'll take a long lease, so that I can do it over to suit myself. The drawing room paper is hideous, and I'd like to throw the two small rooms on the third floor into one, and put in more bathrooms." Loring had barely touched her income during the past year, so that she had plenty of money to make the changes she deemed necessary. In an incredibly short time workmen were installed and the place was made habitable. She returned to Woodsmere within the week as she had planned, and began to make preparations for her ultimate departure.

Hoffman listened to her description of her new home. "I always intended to retire some day and live in Washington," he said, with a whimsical little smile. "Now I'm retired, but I may not choose where I shall live. This much we know: we have today, but tomorrow lies in God's hands, and we are best off when we do not draw too much upon the future."

Loring was on her knees playing with Royall, who was laboriously making the

long journey from one end of the hearth-rug to the other.

"Don't you ever rebel?" she asked. "Aren't there days when a cycle of Cathay is a dreary prospect—when it would be much better to die in harness?"

Hoffman's face paled and his long hands gripped the sides of his chair. "Do I show no scars of battle? Ah, dear friend, no one knows how I long to take up my work again. If I did not feel that even here I am doing something, I don't believe I could bear it."

"But you are so much better. Is there no possibility of your ever coming back into our world again?"

"Not to do surgical work. I am better—I am almost well; but now I shall devote myself to teaching others what I have learned." His deepest eyes glowed with almost fanatic fire. He would feel that he had not wasted these years of his life, if he could demonstrate to his fellow men the effects of his theories and persuade them to attempt a like cure. He preached a gospel of health, and he demanded not only physical but moral sanity. He would purge the souls of nerve sick victims as well as cure their bodies.

In her new home Loring was happy. New people sought her out; new interests crowded out the old; new purposes came to take the place of the old emptiness; and she began to live in a world which she saw was good and lovable. She never forgot Woodsmere. Each spring she journeyed up to the mountains with Royall and Anne, and watched the development of Hoffman's idea. With her help he purchased several hundred acres of mountainside, and began cultivating it. It was his plan to make the colony self-supporting. When her house was occupied by patients, she stayed at the main house with him, and her practical common sense was of such great value that it was not long before she began to feel a personal responsibility in the success of the scheme. It progressed slowly, for even the magic of Hoffman's name did not attract, and in the beginning many who came refused to stay the necessary time to complete a cure; but they both persevered, and in

the end the seed she helped Hoffman to plant blossomed and brought forth fruit.

It was a different place from the Woodsmere Loring had first seen. A broad road led from the station to the plateau, and a carryall, with easy springs now made the daily trip to meet the incoming train. The Doctor's house was practically unchanged, but within the radius of a few hundred feet a dozen cabins had been erected, some of three rooms, some of four. A long, one-storied log house contained the common living room, dining room and kitchen, the latter presided over by a good cook, and a canvas awning could be spread from this building to the various cabins in very stormy weather. Outside of the cook and Eben, who still did the chores, there were no servants; and the colonists cared for their own houses and worked in the fields. Some tended the live stock; others helped indoors. In winter there were rugs to be woven, wood to be carved, leather to be tooled, embroidery and sewing for the women's skillful fingers, and basket weaving and clay modeling for the children. For there were children at Woodsmere as well—little stunted, diseased bodies and backward minds. Loring found them amid squalid surroundings and sent them to Hoffman, who cared for them either at his own house or parceled them out among the women patients who desired their special care. And all the children who were sent to Woodsmere grew in strength and in health, and their minds developed in harmony with their bodies.

In the valley a pulp factory had been established, and the village grew to be a thriving town. Most of the old lumbermen moved away, but a few of them, Jim Torby among the number, allied themselves with the new industry. The majority of the factory hands, however, were ignorant Slavs, and they viewed the colony in the hills with mingled awe and suspicion. Disease they could understand, and lunacy they feared, and they gradually came to harbor resentment against the health seekers, who, to their untutored minds, must have some contagion to spread, else they

would not seclude themselves from their fellows in this fashion.

Hoffman spoke once of the antagonism of the factory workers. "You will be surprised to hear that Jim Torby is at the head of the opposition. He has gone in for the 'survival of the fittest' doctrine, and he came here one day to tell me that I was endangering the health of the millhands by my colony of sick people, and he wanted me to move to the other side of the mountain. I told him I had established myself here before the factory was started and mine was the prior right; besides, one can't catch nerves. He argued that the sick were better off out of the world, but I bade him recall my appearance when I first came here, and asked him if he would call me an invalid today. He grudgingly admitted that I looked saved, but I was an exceptional case."

"And Nora? Still no news of her?"

Hoffman sighed. "She has disappeared completely. We traced her as far as Boston, but lost track of her there. Because I gave the man a day's shelter when he came up here to fish, Jim was inclined to visit some of his wrath on me, but he's cooled down now, and though he curses the man, he refuses to talk about her."

"Poor little Nora! She was so pretty. Sometimes I blame myself, and wonder if the ribbons in her curls were at the bottom of her downfall."

That winter Hoffman wrote that Nora had returned, deserted by her lover and bearing her child in her arms. Torby opened his door to her but not his heart, and Nora, broken in health, spent her days in tears.

XI

YEARS passed, and Loring fitted together the pieces of a new life and was content. At her home in Washington she gathered around her people who were accomplishing things in the world. She had her boy, grown sturdy in an atmosphere of care and forethought; she had Miriam Gray nearby for intimate companionship, and she had David Hoffman engrossed in his wonderful work in

the mountains. Year by year Woodsmere claimed more of her time, and she gave many hours to the problem that Hoffman contended he had solved.

Miriam scolded her roundly. "You are too young to take up this work seriously. Can't you see the beauty of strong minds and healthy bodies? Can't men and women interest you as such? It isn't fair to be always poking underneath the surface to discover the canker eating its way into the flesh; it isn't decent to pull the bandage off a sorrow that goes about properly veiled."

Loring smiled at her friend's vehemence. "Indecent, unfair—you apply harsh terms. I admit I am interested in psychology; what then?"

"You are no scientist; you are an attractive woman, fairly young—for you can't be over forty-two or three."

Loring looked up. "You know perfectly well I won't be forty until March," she said. Then she laughed, as she saw through Miriam's ruse to awaken her dormant vanity.

"What do a few years more or less matter when a woman is out of the race, as you profess to be?" Then she continued: "Frankly, I think you are morbid. You should marry. Royall is getting to be a big boy. In a couple of years you'll send him to boarding school: then what will you do with your days?"

"You advise marriage as an occupation?"

"If you wish to put it that way, yes. And while we're on the subject, I'll go further and suggest that you marry Allan Keep. He's all a woman could desire in the way of a husband, clever, well bred, with a small fortune outside of his pay as a retired officer. Besides, he's very fond of you."

"That being the last consideration." Loring was amused. She knew quite well how Commander Keep felt in the matter. He had been in Washington for three years, and he had not left her in doubt as to his feelings, steadily declining to accept as final her persistent refusal of his offer.

Miriam passed over the slur. "With another woman it would be the first; but

if you won't marry for sentimental reasons, marry for sensible ones. It's absurd making a fetish of the past. Of course I never could understand your feeling for Paul Redding; he was so much younger than you—if not actually in years, in that boyish outlook men of his stamp seldom lose. He was your inferior intellectually, and yet as far as I know, there has been no man since in your life."

Loring turned away her head; she preferred to avoid Miriam's eyes. "I loved him; isn't that answer enough?"

"Pshaw! It's a worn out romance by this time, and you can't live always on a memory. Why not put it out of your life entirely, and think of the future?"

But Loring shook her head. "I think when the time comes to send Royall away, I shall join David Hoffman at Woodsmere," she said.

Miriam narrowed her eyes. "Once I fancied you would end by marrying him; in that case I could understand your enthusiasm for the work."

"There never was the slightest hint of that sort of affection between us. I know his story. He was in love with a girl in his youth, and she died; and now his love is for all humanity."

"Beautiful, but so unsatisfying. Do neither of you ever think of mundane things, the warmth of a handclasp, the comfort of a human touch?"

"I don't believe he does, and I'm sure I don't. Miriam, you can't fashion a love story for me; the materials are lacking."

"Oh, no, they're not; underneath your calm the fire smolders. How would it be with you, I wonder, if Paul Redding were suddenly ordered here?"

"What makes you think of such uncomfortable topics today? I, too, have wondered. But he is married, and the past is past."

"Nevertheless it has a way of coming up in our throats, like onions."

"How absurd you are!" And then she added, as Miriam rose: "What, are you going? After having stirred up all sorts of memories, you leave me alone to quiet them?"

"If I stayed, could I help?" Miriam

paused, but Loring made no effort to detain her.

"You're right. Besides, you've only put into words what my innermost consciousness has told me a hundred times; and yet, being as I am, can I do differently? The gods exact payment for self-indulgence."

"Yes, but you did not indulge yourself. As long as Percy lived, you were letter loyal."

"How little that means! But I wasn't thinking of Percy; I was referring to Agnes Redding. I tried my best to rob her."

"How do you know but what today she would bless you had you succeeded? You can't tell whether she's happy or unhappy. He certainly loved you when he married her, and a cold husband doesn't help a woman to bear her lot."

Loring sighed. "It's easy for a man to simulate affection."

"Yes, but are women ever deceived?"

Loring wondered if they were, and her thoughts, given an introspective turn, tortured her.

The past had never lost its vividness. Royall was very like Paul. He had the same thick hair that grew low on his forehead; he had the same merry dark eyes, the same beautifully curved mouth and the white even teeth that made Paul's smile so charming. He was nearly ten years of age, and she had begun to plan for his future. He loved the sea, and she would have liked to send him to Annapolis; but that would bring him too close to his father. She wondered if he would take to the study of medicine, and she determined to give him every opportunity to become impressed with the grandeur of David Hoffman's career.

Paul seemed to be advancing in the service. From time to time she saw his name mentioned in a way that redounded to his credit. But of Agnes she learned nothing beyond the fact that she joined Paul whenever he was stationed on shore. Whether they were happy, and whether they had children, she could not discover.

That evening Commander Keep sat beside her at dinner. "I am going to

ask permission to introduce a friend of mine," he said, "a woman I knew in the Philippines. She has always interested me, for I fancy there are depths in her character that are worth exploring." He had a keen, clever face, and when he was not making love, Loring found him agreeable. Now she smiled, for she knew of his fondness for tracking a way through feminine fields.

"Who is this lake whose smooth surface you wish to stir up with your stick?" she asked.

"She is sitting next to Albert Frame, the little woman in gray."

Loring gazed in the direction indicated. "Her name?"

"Mrs. Redding."

Somehow Loring felt as if she had expected that answer, and though her heart seemed to stop beating, she managed to control her voice. "She doesn't look any of the things you claim for her."

"That is because you haven't seen her eyes. They are remarkable eyes; I've seen them shining with the glory of the stars, and I've seen them empty."

"How empty?" Loring caught her breath.

"As if there weren't a thing in the world that could fill them. She's very brave; she faced a situation in the Philippines that would have ruined a less courageous woman, but although she knew instant death might follow the least sign of wavering, she put up a bold front and won out. Men liked her in Manila; whenever a chap was in real trouble, he hunted up Agnes Redding. It seemed as if she'd been through enough to make her very sympathetic."

"You infer she is not happy."

"I make the inference on my own account."

Loring's loyalty to Paul made her undertake his defense. "I don't like women who parade their sorrows in public," she said.

Keep raised his brows at her tone. "I see I am giving you a wrong impression; won't you suspend judgment until you meet her?"

"Very well. Where is her husband?" Loring put the question carelessly, though it meant so much to her.

"At sea. Please don't misunderstand. I am not criticising him, although I think it is usually the man's fault when a good woman is unhappy. Paul Redding has a brilliant record, and now he's taking up aeronautics, trying to demonstrate the feasibility of employing airships in modern naval warfare; but he's a careless chap, wrapped up in his own affairs, and they have no children."

"Hush; she is looking this way." Loring became conscious that Agnes Redding was staring at them, her near-sighted eyes contracting as she made out Keep's features across the board.

He smiled and nodded, and her face lighted up.

Afterward they met. Loring held out her hand, and all the animosity which she had cherished against Agnes died out as their hands touched. Paul had referred to her as small of stature; Keep spoke of her as a little woman; but Loring found her of medium height, with a person that suggested maternity. She looked as if she should have half a dozen children clinging to her skirts. Years in the East had obliterated any trace of youthful prettiness, and she apparently lacked personal vanity. She was neatly but plainly dressed; her prematurely gray hair was coiled at the back of her head; her features were good, but her skin was sallow. She wore no jewelry of any description save her wedding ring. Her voice was pleasantly modulated, and she talked easily. Loring searched her face for the sadness Keep had spoken of, but it was free from any other expression than the one natural to the moment. They talked generalities, with Keepmaking a conversational third. Agnes told that Redding was in South America with the fleet; he might return home in spring, but nothing was certain.

She expected to remain in Washington for a month. As they parted she asked Loring to come to see her.

"I am stopping with the Frames, and Fanny tells me she is at home on Fridays."

Loring seized upon the day as an excuse. "I am also at home on Fridays,

but I shall try to find you some other afternoon," she said.

When she reached home she went upstairs swiftly to the nursery. Royall was sleeping peacefully, one chubby hand on the outside of the covers. Loring bent her head and touched it lightly with her lips, while her eyes caressed him adoringly. Mother fear gripped her heart. Did the coming of Agnes Redding portend danger? She could not tell; she knew only that the sight of the woman who was now Paul's wife made her old wound bleed afresh.

She wrote to David Hoffman: "Life plays queer pranks with us, and now, after years of calm, when I thought I had brought my ship through the shoals to a safe anchorage, there looms up a reef on which I may be dashed to pieces. Agnes Redding is in Washington. I have met her; and strange to say, instead of antipathy I am impelled toward liking. She does not look like a happy woman, but she looks good, and I think she must feel the great lack in her life. Perhaps that is what draws us together: we each have something that the other has missed. When I look at her, I remember the glory of my brief wifehood, and I don't believe I would change it for the long gray days that are hers. She has no children, and yet she is the ideal mother, firm in character, void of petulance and truthful. She has spoken of Paul, and I have never said that I knew him. At our first meeting, it would have been easy; now it would sound like a confession. She is proud of him, for he has done well and he is honored in the service, but I don't believe she has ever come very close to him. There is an underlying note of grief in her voice that makes you want to sympathize with her.

"If there were a possibility of Paul's coming here, what should I do, stay and face him, or run to you for refuge? I've dreamed of our meeting so often, planned what I would say, even decided upon the tone of my voice; and yet if we were to meet suddenly, I wonder if I'd remember these things?

"Should I see Paul again—should he learn of Royall, what shall I say?

These are only possibilities, yet when one lives a lie, one must be on guard for every contingency."

Miriam looked on in puzzled wonder. Then she asked: "Why do you make a friend of his wife?"

"I like her."

"Curiosity I could understand, but liking—" Miriam shook her head. "Has she ever seen Royall?"

Then Loring knew that her cousin had guessed part of the truth. "No," she said. "Why?"

Miriam was hurt at the lack of confidence, but she would not speak first. "Answer that question yourself."

But Loring dared not answer that question. Instead, she began to wonder if it would not be well to tell Miriam the whole story.

That same afternoon, as she was leaving cards at the French Embassy, Agnes passed. Loring leaned over the side of the victoria and stopped her. They chatted for a few moments; then Loring said: "Are you going home? Won't you let me drive you there? It's such a beautiful day; perhaps we could go out as far as the aqueduct and back?"

Agnes accepted the invitation, and the two women, so curiously drawn to each other, drove on leisurely, talking the talk that hides, not reveals.

As they rounded a corner Loring leaned forward. She caught sight of Royall and Anne; they were waiting to cross the street, and they did not see her, but the movement attracted Agnes's attention, and caused her to turn her head in the same direction. At that moment Royall spied his mother. His little figure straightened; his hand flew to his cap; his eyes twinkled, and his mouth laughed a greeting. Agnes stared at him, her eyes straining behind their glasses. Out of the past she evoked the image of a boy she had known, a little older perhaps, not quite so handsome, but a boy with the same wavy dark hair, the same big brown eyes, the same mouth shaped like a Cupid's bow; and her heart yearned toward the child on the sidewalk.

Loring's face changed; the pride of maternity softened her features as she

answered her son's salutation. Then the victoria turned the corner and the child was lost to sight. For a moment motherhood swamped caution, and she forgot that this was the one woman from whom she wished to shield Royall. "My son," she said.

Agnes turned pale. All her longing for a child crystallized as she saw this woman's child who was so like what her own might have been. "He is not like you," she said, trying to control the trembling of her lips.

Loring felt as if her secret hung in the balance. Facing a disclosure which might ruin three lives, she prayed for courage to carry her deception to the end. "He is like his father." And then, hating herself for the lie implied, she went on: "Mr. Bryce died before Royall was born."

"Oh!" Impulsively Agnes reached out, and touched the other woman's glove. "Nevertheless I can't help envying you. I have wanted children so much, it seems as if my longing must take shape; and I'm sure Mr. Redding would be happier if we had a son. Childless people have so much time for discontent. I wonder if it would bore you if I talked about myself?"

Loring responded conventionally. She dreaded knowing more than Agnes unconsciously revealed, and yet she could not but feel intensely interested in the inner life of this woman, who stood in her place.

Taking her interest for granted, Agnes went on: "We were children together when we weren't much older than your little boy, and Paul was the only sweetheart I ever had. When he went to Annapolis I cried, I was sure I would lose him, he was so handsome. And when he was graduated I thought I had lost him; he was kind and brotherly, but he did not love me. Then he went to sea, and sometimes he wrote, and again for months I would not hear. He always brought me some trifle when he came home, but his manner never got beyond friendly interest. The year before we were married he came home on sick leave, and he seemed so wretched that I did my best to comfort him. Perhaps I

went to his house more than I should have done, but I wanted to help him to bear a sorrow I knew existed, though he never spoke about it. We became engaged, and I was so sure of his love that I never questioned its quality; he would not have asked me to be his wife if he had not cared more for me than for any other girl, so, although shortly afterward he was ordered to the Philippines, I was happy. My cousins, with whom I lived, moved away just after he sailed, and the suggestion to follow him and be married at Manila came from Paul's mother. Much as I loved him, I don't believe I would have volunteered, but the folks at home urged me, and I wrote I was coming out with some army people we both knew. Paul had been ill again, and he looked like a ghost when he met me; but we were married at once, and he was always kind. I am not complaining, Mrs. Bryce—no woman ever had a better husband; but I think our lives would have been fuller if we had had a child." She broke off abruptly, and Loring with an odd choking sensation in her throat, could find no ready words, so she merely pressed the hand still lying beside her own. After a pause Agnes resumed: "I am thinking of adopting a little boy; it would give us both an object to live for."

Loring stirred uneasily. "But wouldn't you fear to undertake the training of an unknown nature?"

"I have been accustomed to children all my life; they seem to know I love them, for they come to me instinctively. It is as much for my husband's sake as for my own; I think he needs the influence of a child in the house."

"But a strange child!" Loring wondered if it were jealousy which prompted her protest. Somehow she could not bear the idea of Paul lavishing affection on this unknown child whom Agnes wished to bring into his life.

Agnes smiled. She had thought it over so often that she saw only the lovable aspect of her plan. "It wouldn't be a strange child if we adopted him."

"How much you love your husband!" Loring suddenly saw the beauty of

Agnes's nature revealed, and impulsively she gave voice to her admiration.

"I think more of his happiness than I do of anything else in the world!" She spoke simply, and there was a moment of silence. Then she wondered at her outburst. "I don't know why I have spoken to you so freely—I am usually a reserved person; but, curiously, I felt certain that you would understand."

Loring sighed. She was conscious of a strong desire to be this woman's friend, but circumstance had raised up an impassable barrier between them.

XII

AGNES REDDING wrote to her husband: "I have met a Mrs. Bryce in Washington, a very beautiful woman, a widow with plenty of money and a good position; but instead of crowning herself with social laurels, she is keenly interested in bettering the condition of the poor. Allan Keep, who introduced us, says she is too young to turn to good deeds, and he wishes to marry her, but I don't think she will have him. She has a little boy to whom she is devoted, and I like her better than anyone I've met in years. I think you, too, would enjoy meeting her; she is most unusual."

He got the letter at Rio, and for a moment he was stunned; but at the mention of the boy he knew his first wild suspicion that this Mrs. Bryce was his Loring could not be true. He had never forgotten her; he had erected a shrine to her memory and he had worshipped there long after he had the right to think of any woman but the one who dwelt at his side. He had been kind to Agnes, hiding his soul sickness from her as best he could. At first he wondered if she felt the lack in him, then, manlike, after a time he ceased to wonder, as she fitted herself into the niche he made for her in his life. She was the ideal homemaker, carrying her atmosphere about with her no matter how often her household goods were transported from place to place. He admired her gentle disposition; he respected her pure womanhood; but she left the emotional side of

his nature untouched. Loring had been source and inspiration of the one passion of his life; Agnes could not rekindle those dead ashes. And yet on the whole he was not unhappy. Agnes was unobtrusive; she looked carefully after his material wants, and as he progressed in his chosen field he was dimly conscious that much of his success abroad was due to the calm of his domestic life. He threw himself into his work, at first to seek relief from his desperate grief, afterward because that work became dear to him.

Once when he was in New York he went up to see the house where Loring had dwelt, but it was now occupied by strangers, and he could learn nothing. Miriam Gray had also disappeared, and he could not trace her. Perhaps it was better so, he told himself; and then, because he could not forget, he grew more self-absorbed than ever. On her part, Agnes never mistook the shadow of affection he gave for the love she had expected, and though in the beginning of her married life she shed bitter tears, she went to work to make the best out of the scraps of tenderness he doled out to her. Living at his side, she soon learned to recognize the first signs of a period of depression, and being an observant woman, she put them down to their real cause. As though he had told her, she knew he had loved some other woman. What had happened she was too proud to ask, so she bore with him in silence; and after a time she began to love him even more tenderly, because he was unhappy and needed her ministrations. She felt in her heart that if they had had children it would have awakened a side of his nature that now lay dormant; but this was too sacred a subject for her to broach, and how he felt about it she never knew. He was essentially a man's man; all the boyish part of him, which had seemed so dominant to Miriam Gray, faded out the day he read of Loring's death. Women had no place in his life, and Agnes was never forced to combat jealousy of the present. When he went out socially and women made themselves attractive to him, he was always courteous but distant, and a

bit bored. He listened with indulgence to Agnes's praise of a new beauty, then buried himself in his book on engineering. Lately he had taken up aviation, and had earnestly petitioned the Navy Department to let him take up the study of aeronautics. In Brazil he made one memorable flight. He urged an innovation which he had thought out, but met with resistance; he cabled to Washington for authority to make a trial on his own responsibility. In reply he got orders to report at once at headquarters. As he was about to board the steamer for New York, he received Agnes's letter. There was no use in answering it—he would arrive as soon as the mail; so he contented himself with sending her a wireless, and spent most of his waking hours figuring on his new device.

Agnes met Loring at a tea. "My husband arrived this morning. They are going to allow him to take a course in aviation, and he thinks he has hit upon a balance wheel which will make it practically safe. Isn't it wonderful? You can't blame me for being proud of him, can you? I want you to meet him—no, he isn't here this afternoon, but may I bring him to call?"

Loring wondered if her voice sounded harsh to the other woman's ears as she answered: "I shall be delighted, but not this week. I haven't an hour free."

Agnes laughed drearily. "I didn't mean right away. You can't imagine how busy he is; I've scarcely had five minutes with him. That's the penalty we pay for having clever husbands."

Loring fought for her self-control. She had gone on in her blindness, refusing to face issues, still believing herself equal to guiding her own destiny, till every avenue of escape was cut off. She dared not risk leaving Paul in ignorance, and yet how could she warn him that she was alive? If she wrote, the letter might fall into Agnes's hands and ruin them all. If she took refuge with David Hoffman, it would be only a temporary reprieve; for even should she remain away all the time he was in town, there was the chance that he might run into Miriam and learn the truth from her. She must come to some decision at once.

She broke a dinner engagement and dined in the nursery with Royall, making a pretense of eating, but all the while she kept wondering miserably what she should do if Paul asked a reckoning at her hands. Suppose he should demand his son?

Royall was delighted to have her with him, but his joy only stabbed her heart with fresh pain. Afterward they pored over his lesson books together, but at eight o'clock he went to bed, and she moved restlessly from one room to another, a vague presentiment of evil stinging her nerves.

It was barely nine o'clock when the telephone rang.

"Mrs. Bryce!" She recognized the voice instantly. "I must see you at once; it is important. I am coming around now."

For a moment she hesitated, then, knowing the hopelessness of putting off the scene, gave her consent.

He was shown into the library. As he stood in the doorway, her heart leaped to her lips; the years slipped away as if by magic. It was Paul, her lover, her husband; and she trembled before him. He was ghastly in color; his hair was disordered, his eyes blood-shot.

"Keep told me. Good God, am I going mad? You alive all these years! How dared you hide from me?" He spoke swiftly.

"Paul!" She was pleading with him now, all her fine phrases forgotten, but he brushed aside excuses; he wanted reasons. As she saw him shaken, unnerved, she lost her first fear. She told the story, haltingly as she touched on the days after she had recovered her reason and found that he was lost to her. She told of her struggle and her final renunciation. But again he asked, interrupting the tale that was now running smoothly:

"How dared you decide? You were my wife; could you annul our contract simply by willing it? Don't you see what you've done? You've made me a criminal!"

"It was too late to undo your second marriage. Think what it would have

meant had I spoken out then! Ah, no, believe me, I took the only wise course. You are her husband, not mine. She is Mrs. Redding; I am Mrs. Bryce. The past is a dream; I prefer it so."

"Does that make it so?" He was stern, not quite master of himself, for the shock had been tremendous. "And what of my son? Have you any valid reason to offer why you should have kept the knowledge of his birth from me? He, too, goes by the name of Bryce, a posthumous child! A beautiful child, they tell me, honoring Percy Bryce's name; and I—I have no son. I may attain honor, but I have no one to whom I can bequeath my fame. Loring, did you think for one moment I would allow this?" He sank into a chair and covered his face with his hands, his strong frame shaken with tearless sobs.

Loring wondered if she could bear it. He had come to her full of reproaches, no word of pity for all she had gone through, no memory of past tenderness making him willing to spare her. He came like a judge, demanding justice, setting up his man's code and forcing her to admit that she was guilty. But finally the tension broke and he remembered the woman. He spoke of his love, of his agony, how his heart had withered in his breast. He told her that he had been able to find solace only in his work, and that her loss had been a daily grief for years. In reply to her questioning he spoke of Agnes, of her quiet devotion, how she took what he had to give and made no demands for more. He admitted that he had learned to accept this second best for what it was worth, and to be grateful for a companionship which left him free to develop his scientific tastes.

"And would you change all this now? Would you hold her up to public scorn? Ah, no, Paul; tonight you are quite mad. Tomorrow you will see things differently; you will see that I am right and you will aid me to keep up the deception."

He was quieter now, and she thought he was in the mood to listen, but at her words he sprang to his feet. "But my

son, what of him? Do you think I could bear to have him always a stranger?"

Loring drew her hand across her eyes. "I don't see what else you can expect."

"That is easy for you to say. You have had him to yourself for ten years; you have deliberately ignored my claim. A woman can't bring up a boy properly. He'll soon get beyond you; he'll need a man's hand to govern him. Do you think I can stand aside and let someone else play mentor? He is my son, Loring—have you forgotten that? He will inherit my nature. Who could know how to deal with it as well as I?"

"I can't argue with you tonight; give me a few days; there must be some way out of this tangle. I can't see it now, but it isn't possible my years of sacrifice should count for nothing."

"You were always prone to sacrifice others as well as yourself; and see what it has led to!"

"Spare me, Paul!" She could bear no more.

He softened suddenly. "Ah, my dear, forgive me; I've wounded you cruelly. But don't you see the wrong you've done us all? When we try to be stronger than our fate, we overwhelm ourselves, and those we love go down with us in the wreck. We can't endure the consequences of our acts alone—those nearest to us are also involved; did you think of that?"

She shuddered. "Could I think of anything in those days but that you had married her, and I was thrust out of your life? There was nothing for me to do but to hide somewhere until I was strong enough to take up my burden and bear it with a show of resignation. How I prayed for death! How I wished I had been taken in place of my poor maid, Nanette! It wasn't easy to reconcile myself to the part I determined to play, but in time I learned to do without you, as you learned to do without me. We have not been happy, but we have not been miserable; and you have won distinction."

"What does it amount to? I'd rather live over again those days with you in my arms than know any honor the world could give me." He was beginning to

remember vividly now; he was looking at her with passionate, troubled eyes. He found her little changed, the lines of her figure fuller, the expression of her face less questioning; but every feature was as dear as it had been, and he found it only too easy to sweep away the years. But Loring had had time to take command of the situation.

"Don't, Paul; those days are dead, and there is a grave in which they are buried. You and I have nothing to do with the past, but we have a great deal to do with the future, to keep that always clean and honorable. I've met Agnes and I like her; she is a good woman. You belong to her; go now; she must be expecting you. Later we must come to some sort of an understanding. I realize that, but for tonight let it end here."

"And my boy, can't I see him?" He was humble, still too upset to be sure of his ground.

Loring went to her desk and picked up a large photograph in a silver frame. "He is asleep. This is an excellent likeness; it was taken at Christmas."

Redding held out his hand. He stood gazing hungrily at the pictured face, which, feature for feature, was so like his own; then he handed it back reverently.

Loring wrote to Hoffman: "Friend David, help me, for I am fallen on evil days. While I racked my brains for some way to let Paul know I was alive, he stumbled across the truth, and he is beside himself. You told me once that a strong soul works out its own salvation, and I laid the flattering unction to my own spirit; but now I know I am but a poor, weak soul, for I've looked into a man's eyes and I am afraid. Do you know what he wants? He wants Royall, his son. And he is mine, flesh of my flesh, substance of my substance, child of my sorrow; no other has a right to him! I've been mother and father for ten years—oh, friend David, how will it end? Shall I have strength to fight him? Surely no other woman was ever in such straits! What I went through before was but a preparation for this. And I love him; he is just as dear to me as he

ever was. I glory in him—in his strength, in the fire of his eyes, the sweetness of his mouth. I know it is wrong to feel this way, but how can I help it? He was here today, and he demanded to see Royall. It tore my heart to see them together; they are so alike no one could doubt their relationship. Paul was white to his lips; he held Royall against his knee and talked to him in the most pitiful fashion. When I could bear it no longer I sent him out of the room, and then Paul broke down. He cried, friend David, and you, who have seen a strong man cry, you know what I went through. What shall I do? If I take Royall away he will follow; he is in no mood to consider consequences. And then there is Agnes. She will learn all if this keeps up. Paul wishes to confess part of the truth to her. To save her self-respect he will let her divorce him. He will resign from the service; and then when he is free, he and Royall and I will start a new life somewhere in the West. And he does not propose this out of love for me, but out of a passionate desire for his son. I told him he was mad to think of such a thing, and he asked me what I had to suggest instead. He sees no other way to satisfy his longing, but I think I see a way—a hard, bitter way, and I wonder if I have courage to set my feet upon it? He goes to Denver tomorrow. He will be gone two weeks—there is a big aviation meet there; and when he returns I have promised to give him some answer. If Miriam were here I would confide in her, but she has gone to be with Frances at this time. You have never failed me; help me now, for I cannot stand alone!"

So far, however, Agnes had noticed nothing but that Paul was in one of his darkest moods. She put it down to worry over his invention, though she never remembered seeing him upset over his work before. She heard him moving about his room at night, sometimes until daybreak; and when he did sleep he moaned as if in pain. She was a little hurt that he did not ask her to accompany him to Denver, but as she noted his tired eyes her heart softened and she forgave him, busying herself in doing little things for his comfort. He thanked

her dumbly, an extra hand pressure, then he was gone.

Loring tried to avoid Agnes. She caught one glimpse of the other woman's face, patient, barren of interest, and she turned away. She felt as if she were looking on while Agnes's happiness crumbled slowly into dust.

When she returned home she ran upstairs to the playroom. It was raining, and as his throat bothered him slightly, she had kept Royall home from school. When she entered he was on the floor playing with his leaden soldiers, and the opposing armies were marshaled in force against each other. Toy cannon occupied a place of vantage on the side of a manufactured hill. He was calling out directions, urging the generals in command to bring the battle to a climax, and his little face was alight with earnestness, his dark eyes sparkled with excitement.

Loring watched a moment, then she went up to him swiftly, and knelt behind him, putting her arms about his sturdy form and resting her cheek against his hair. "Is the battle going well, son? Who is winning? May I play with you?" she said, as, after returning her kiss, he wriggled out of her embrace and concentrated his attention on his mimic warriors.

"All right." He was complacent, not cordial. "Only move 'em as I tell you to."

Loring submitted meekly, and moved her men here and there, always to her disadvantage, for the other army was the one he had picked out to win, and her brave little painted soldiers in the gay uniforms were foredoomed to defeat. But for one moment she lost interest, and her mind escaped from the matter in hand. She was recalled to her part in the game by a sharp command, and as she leaned forward to comply, the lace of her sleeve knocked over a troop of advancing cavalry.

"Oh, dear! I am so sorry!" She was contrite. "Let me stand them up again." And she laid eager hands on the prostrate horsemen, but he stopped her, his face clouded with chagrin.

"You know, mother, I always play

when they fall down they're dead," he reminded her sternly, then gave vent to his grievance. "Now of course, I can't win!" He sighed and swept the opposing armies together in a confused heap. "Women are awful stupid about boys' games!" His lip quivered, but for once his mother made no effort to comfort him. She merely sat on the floor, staring before her and pondering over his words.

Was it true that women were stupid about boys' games? She had tried so hard to adapt herself to his moods. It was difficult, for she had no childish memories of masculine playmates to guide her, and she had thought she was succeeding; but now for one careless blunder she was shown up in her true colors. She was stupid. The criticism hurt. It was bad enough now, but suppose, as years went by, she could not get into the spirit of his work—suppose she were always to be an outsider, tolerated but not taken into full confidence and treated as an equal, her sex barring her from a perfect comprehension of the masculine idea?

Paul would not have blundered. He would not have thoughtlessly knocked over a troop of the enemy rushing upon certain victory; he would have played the game in all seriousness, taking as much pleasure in it as Royall did. What if in keeping them apart she were not only wronging Paul but Royall? The suggestion was intolerable, and she tried to fight it, but it would not be put down. It loomed up on the horizon of the future adding a new complication to the weary muddle of existing affairs.

Royall began putting away his toy soldiers. He was still resentful, and he was surprised that his mother displayed no sign of contrition for spoiling his fun. He glanced at her from time to time from under his lowered lids, but she just sat there, gazing aimlessly into space, her face settling gradually into sad lines. When he saw that, he was moved to remorse. Perhaps he had reproved her too sharply. She was wrong of course, but, after all, she was mother, she meant well, and she was evidently sorry, so he felt bound to soothe her regret. As he placed

the last man in the box, he got up and came over to her.

"There, mother, don't feel bad; only tuck up your sleeves next time." It was a generous amend, but he was not prepared for the rush of gratitude that followed. Loring caught him to her, crying softly and kissing him as if she could never get enough of her lips against his soft young cheek.

"Oh, my baby, my own baby!" she said, and her arms were strong enough to hold him against his will.

"Say, mother, don't cry; I'm awful sorry." He frowned his protest. "But I'm no baby!"

When she released him, he smoothed his tumbled locks with both hands. He did not understand his mother's tears and caresses; he surely had not been severe enough to make her cry, but he resolved upon another concession.

"Let's play checkers; you beat me last time." This was very generous, for he well knew that his mother nearly always beat him. She believed that if she did her best it would stimulate him to greater effort.

Loring accepted, smiling through her tears. "Royall, you are a little man—mother's little man!" she said.

XIII

THAT night Miriam Gray came home. She was full of the new baby, her third grandchild, and she spoke of Frances and her deep content.

"I feel that she broadened after those months she spent with you at Woodsmere. By the way, Dr. Hoffman sent her some pictures; and she says she would not have known the place, it has changed so. What do you hear of him?"

Loring brightened. "The most interesting accounts of his work. The place is growing rapidly, and he writes he is well content with the results of this year's labor. Work is certainly an antidote for sorrow."

"I should think he would be overcrowded."

"No, because there are certain conditions attached, and he keeps no one

there who is not willing to accept his theory. According to it, there is some sort of labor to be done by even the weakest members of the colony, and unless you do your appointed share you may not remain."

"But suppose you are really unable?"

"He takes that into consideration, and the task is chosen according to your strength." She paused a moment. "It is wonderful to see a dream come true, and if I were to lose Royall, the only consolation I could seek would be to labor in his vineyard."

"Loring, are you still hugging that hobby to your breast?"

"Yes, Miriam."

"Then I suppose you've refused Mr. Keep again. Oh, dear, I told him not to be discouraged. A persistent hammering knocks down any wall, and yours is built up from the flimsy material of indifference." She sighed.

There was an interval of silence. Miriam wondered how she could bring about a marriage between her cousin and Allan Keep, which she felt certain would be for Loring's happiness. But Loring was seeing a vision. She saw herself at Woodsmere, working side by side with David Hoffman, while Royall took his place in his father's house. The vision had been nebulous before; now it crystallized, until it took perfect form. There was so much that a woman could do at Woodsmere, though Hoffman had all the delicacy that is supposed to belong solely to feminine natures. It was a good work he was doing; it was a man's work; and she was coming to believe that it was also a woman's work.

Loring raised her eyes from the towel she was embroidering. "Miriam, what would you do if you had tangled your life so that there was no way out save by cutting?"

"I'd cut." Miriam supposed Loring was referring to the past.

"But that hurts."

"You talk in riddles; can you explain? I don't wish to force your confidence—always remember that; but I am not sure I have your meaning."

Loring welcomed the chance to let

Miriam's clear eyes search out her position. "To explain, I must go back."

"How far?"

"Ten years. The beauty of our friendship, Miriam, has been that it did not require words. When I sent Paul Redding out of my life, I wanted to tell you everything, but you refused to listen. You said you could see for yourself. You were gifted with a clear vision, and I think you knew what I went through, and you sympathized with me. You have taken much on trust, but you must have suspected something; now I want to tell you what really happened in San Francisco."

"You are quite sure it will be best for me to know?" Miriam dreaded having her suspicion put into words.

"Yes. I married Paul Redding out there. Secretly, as it would not do to have the world know—I was such a recent widow, and he was engaged to another woman. You know what followed—the accident when I was reported killed, and how I nearly went mad when I found out that Paul (thinking me dead) had married Agnes; and it was only the coming of Royall that saved me. Well, I've lived—you know how; and I thought, after having made the sacrifice of my happiness, I was entitled to the crumbs of comfort that were left, but I see I was wrong. Paul only learned that I was alive about a week ago, and now he blames me for concealing the truth. He wants Royall; I think he will stop at nothing to gain possession of his son. His career, Agnes, who loves him whole-heartedly, myself—he sweeps us all aside; he wants Royall."

Miriam, who had listened with varying emotions, forgot everything in surprise at this revelation. "And you went through all this in silence! Oh, my dear, what a remarkable woman you are!"

"Remarkable!"

"Yes, for you have given every proof of a love which has no thought of self; and now you contemplate a still greater sacrifice."

"That's as far as I've gotten, contemplation."

"That is far enough. No, Loring,

you are not called upon to give up Royall; he is yours first and for all time. I can understand Paul Redding's desire in the matter, but I don't believe he would accept the solution you propose. Men have many interests in their lives; women have their children. He will get over this; it would break your heart."

"I have had Royall for ten years."

"Is that long enough?"

"You know what I mean. And then think how I have robbed her! She wishes to adopt a child; she told me so. She has empty hands, and she needs a child in her life."

"She would not take your child."

"I think she would."

"Do you leave out the consideration of jealousy, which even the best of us have to reckon with?"

"How could she be jealous now? Paul doesn't love me—he has got over that; he loves his work and Royall. She makes him a good wife. If our marriage had known no break, he would not have accomplished what he has—he would have been too happy. I should have claimed his first thoughts, and his career would have taken second place. She has left him free to do great things; I should have fettered his hands."

"How can you tell? Happy men have accomplished great things in the world. Misery is not the only spur to genius."

"It depends upon the man. Paul was a boy when I met him; sorrow made a man of him. This last grief is turning him into an old man, and I must stop that decay."

"With your own flesh and blood?"

"Yes."

"Oh, the pity of it, the waste of such a nature as yours! Loring, it is not right." But even as she gave utterance to her protest, she knew that her cousin was gathering courage to tread the stony way. "How will you go about it?"

"I shall do nothing until Paul returns. He must tell Agnes the whole story; he must humble himself to win her forgiveness; then we shall right the matrimon-

ial tangle legally. I shall keep Royall until summer; then I'll send him to them for a visit." She rose and stood by the fireplace, her back to her friend. "It will be a long visit. When he is old enough to be told the truth, will he judge me harshly, or will he be able to find room for both of us in his heart? When I dream, Miriam, I dream of him as a great surgeon, carrying the message of health to thousands who will come after us. And who knows but some day I shall have him again at Woodsmere?"

Miriam was speechless. In a way she saw beneath the surface, and knew that it was love for Paul that made the sacrifice possible; that now, as in the beginning, he was Loring's first thought, and that it was his good she was providing for, not her own. After a while she said slowly: "You can't do it; no mother could!" She voiced the protest of all the mothers in the world, but her cry did not shake Loring's composure.

"I can only try."

But once again matters were taken out of her control. A telegram brought her the news that the colony at Woodsmere had been attacked by the workmen from the factory in the valley; that an attempt had been made to set fire to the settlement, but that it had failed, for at the same time a fire had broken out at the mill and had practically wiped out the village. Hoffman had been severely burned; there was great distress, and would she send up some capable nurses at once? Later in the day she got details. The very hour that the Slavs had marched, torch in hand, to wipe out the health resort in the hills, an incendiary had started a blaze in the woodpile of the factory yard, and the men had been recalled from their course of destruction, and had turned back in a frantic endeavor to save their own homes.

Loring sent two doctors and half a dozen nurses off by the night train; then she bought stores and had them shipped. Just before dinner she stopped in to see Miriam.

"I am leaving for Woodsmere in the morning," she said. "I am afraid David Hoffman is worse than they tell me. Will you take Royall for a few days?"

I'll come back as soon as I can, but who knows what I shall find at the top of the world?"

Miriam expressed sympathy. "It seems a pity that ignorance should undo the work of years. Were any of the patients' homes destroyed?"

"No, but they must be terror-stricken. Can you imagine anything worse for nerves than to know a band of madmen are coming to burn you out?"

"How was Dr. Hoffman hurt?"

"Aiding the very men who were bent upon his ruin. He went with them to fight the fire in the village, and was overcome."

"And if Mr. Redding returns?"

"See him for me, and ask him to have patience; but don't try to influence him against my plan. Can't you see how I am needed up there now?"

"Not more than you are here. But there, I sha'n't say any more tonight; and I promise you to be passive in this matter till you return."

Loring thanked her, and then went home.

After she had given her last directions and had packed her bag, she slipped into Royall's room and knelt beside his bed. His face was beautiful in slumber; the long, dark lashes rested on his cheeks; his rosebud mouth was closed, and his nostrils quivered as he breathed lightly, regularly. Every fiber of her being was knit about his little form. He had been her very own; could it be possible that any other woman could understand him half as well? But even that comfort was denied her. Agnes Redding was symbolic of maternity, and in her capable hands Royall's future would be safe.

The journey was long and tiresome, for she was filled with forebodings.

Eben met her at the station, and gave her the latest news. The factory was in ruins, and only a few houses stood in the neighborhood to attest that the now desolate valley had once hummed with activity.

"And no one knows who started the fire?"

Eben lowered his voice. "Seems like the hand of the Lord, Mis' Bryce; least-

ways that's what Jim Torby says. He sits and sits and mutters, and no one darst go near him."

"And Nora?"

"She's safe, but she ain't seen her father. You know, her baby died."

"Dr. Hoffman wrote me. Poor Nora!"

Regarding David Hoffman's condition, Eben was pessimistic, and Loring's heart sank.

One of the Washington doctors met her at the door. "He is conscious, and he appeared to cheer up when we told him you were coming," he said.

"Is he—is he dying?" She managed to get the words out.

"I fear there is little hope. He fought the flames till he was overcome by smoke, and you know what that means."

She nodded. "I'll take off my wraps; then may I see him?"

"Yes; it cannot make much difference."

David Hoffman, swathed in bandages, his hair scorched to a yellowish tinge, lay with wide open eyes on his narrow bed. A look of content came over his face as he caught sight of Loring.

"David!" The cry burst from her involuntarily. She was shocked at his appearance; it was so much worse than she had anticipated.

He tried to smile, but succeeded only in feebly contorting his cracked lips. "It is the end, Loring; will you sit by me? I have many things to say, and my time is short. God has been good. He has spared me till you came." His tones were weak, but even in this hour the indomitable spirit of the man burned with a steady glow.

Loring took the chair vacated by the white-capped nurse.

"Now tell me, is all well with you? Are you at peace with yourself?" His first thought was of her struggle, and before he spoke of his own affairs, he must know how she was progressing.

Her soul shook to its foundations as she gave voice to the decision that broke her heart. "Yes, friend David."

Ineffable joy shone in his eyes.

"Strong soul, you have fought well and you have conquered. Loring, dear Lor-

ing, God will give your empty hands full measure. I told you once that when my time came another would rise up to take my place; I call on you today to do that. You, who have seen the dawn of fulfillment, bring it to perfect flower. You, who know my ideas, my theories, who have helped me, take up my work, throw yourself into it; it will absorb you till you forget your agony, and in mothering the little nerve sick babies who need the tenderest maternal care, you will keep, not lose your child. You cannot stay in the same part of the world that shelters your son under his father's roof; come into this haven of work and peace will reach you, the peace that passeth all human understanding." His voice dropped to a whisper, and he seemed to pray.

Loring bowed her head. "Don't leave me. If I had your companionship, David, I could bear this sacrifice bravely; but alone I am so weak! Live, live for my sake; I need you!" she cried, tears streaming from her eyes.

"You have won your battle single-handed."

"No; I had your help, your encouragement in my ears."

"I was but the mouthpiece of the spirit, that will uphold you when my body is at rest. Do you think our influence dies with us?"

She was quieted by his calm words. "Yours will not, I am sure."

"Then I may count on you? You will not let my work end with me? There will be no repetition of violence; these simple people acted under the leadership of one man."

"You mean Torby?"

"Yes, and his own hand turned against him."

"He faltered at the last?"

"No. I must tell you the truth so that you can shield her should suspicion get abroad. It was Nora who set fire to the mill."

"Nora! Why, I thought she was bedridden!"

"She had strength to crawl to the woodpile; their cottage adjoined the factory yard. She pleaded in vain with her father not to do this thing. I had

been good to her, and she felt she must save me, for Jim had worked himself into a fervor that could not be held back. Curiously, it was in rescuing Nora that I was overcome, and he found us both. I heard her terrified confession, then I knew no more until I opened my eyes and saw him bending over me. He guessed whose hand had fired the pile—I saw that in his face; and I can't foresee what he will do. I've sent for him, but he refuses to come. He is just in his way, and he may conceive it his duty to denounce Nora to the authorities. I want you to protect her. Her mind is warped; she did not realize the consequences of her act."

"Her hand is stained with your blood; how can you forgive her?"

"Poor child! Don't judge her by this insane deed; think of her as she was when she came to learn what you could teach. Her very beauty was a curse to lead her astray; her soul was weak, and it could not right itself after one mishap. Can't you pity her?"

"I'll do what I can, you know that."

There was a pause, and then he spoke again: "Do you still love him?"

"Yes," she answered simply; "but I am certain of one thing: he no longer cares for me as he did, and in time he will be very happy with his wife and Royall. She is a much better woman than I am; if I were not sure of that I could not give them up, for, David, if I wished, I could keep them both."

"At what cost? It would be but for a little while, and then think of your remorse."

Loring groaned. "All I wanted was to be happy, and in my whole life I have had but a few hours!"

"Yet their memory gives you the divine strength that ignores self in order to do good to others. Repentance should be a stepping stone to pity."

"Pity?"

"Yes, for pity is charity founded on a contrite spirit. Negatively good people can be charitable, but only one who has sinned and suffered and repented can feel true pity."

There was silence again between them, but Loring sat by the bedside till the

nurse came and motioned for her to leave.

Hoffman lived for two days, and in that time Loring scarcely left his room. He was conscious to the end, and at the last seemed to suffer little pain. He gave directions as to the disposal of everything, and referred to her constantly as his successor. This reference elicited some surprise among the colonists, but that was overlooked in the great grief that held them all. They accepted Loring's assumption of authority, but their sorrow at Hoffman's death made them torpid in regard to any change in the management of the place.

The day after the funeral Loring went to see Nora. She had been moved to one of the few cabins that remained standing. Torby was seated on the doorstep. He glanced up as she approached, but there was no recognition in his eyes.

"What d'yer want?" he demanded, barring the entrance.

"I am Mrs. Bryce; don't you remember me? And I've come to bring Nora a remembrance from Dr. Hoffman."

As she spoke the name, a shudder went through Torby's lank frame. "We killed him, and he sends her a remembrance! Do you know how it happened?"

"Yes, Torby, he told me. There was One greater than he, who gave His life to save others, and dying, forgave those who tried to harm Him." She spoke softly, reverently, trying to appeal to the fanatical strain running through the rough nature, and trusting to hit upon the right chord to awaken response. The man's features worked convulsively.

"That was a man! My eyes were blinded by uncharitableness and I lifted my hand against the servant of the Lord! Who was I in my littleness to judge him? I am punished, I am struck down; and in my misery he sends me a sign of forgiveness. Mis' Bryce, I once did you wrong in my thoughts. I'm sorry. You must be a good woman because you were his friend. Go in; Nora'll be glad to see yer."

But Loring paused. "I am not good,

Torby. I was wicked and rebellious, and I loved my own way, but he taught me the beauty of sacrifice, and I am trying to follow his teachings." Then she passed through the open doorway.

Nora, lying on a cot, looked up fearfully as a shadow darkened the room, but when she saw her visitor was a woman, she half raised herself on the pillows.

"Nora!" Loring was shocked at the imprint of death so clearly stamped on the girl's features. The frail, wasted form was outlined under the thin coverlet; the clawlike hands, the bluish line about the lips, the hollow eyes and damp forehead told their own tale of the end approaching.

"Mis' Bryce! If it ain't Mis' Bryce!" the girl gasped, a little wonder, a little joy, a little fear in her tones.

To Nora also Loring brought the message of forgiveness and a bequest of money, enough to let father and daughter leave the scene of harrowing memories and to start a new life in some other place. But it was too late for that. Nora had no illusions about her condition. She spoke of her deed with regret, since it had cost the life of the man she had tried to save; but she had inherited some of her father's fanaticism, and she saw the hand of the Lord in everything. She was ready to go. She would like to make her peace with her father, but even his anger counted for little now, she was so close to the eternal borderland. She spoke of her dead baby, and wondered if it would be restored to her in that conventional heaven she so firmly believed in, but she was quite content to leave all matters to a future settlement. Earthly affections would dwindle up there beyond the stars, and whatever was ordained would be right.

Loring came away depressed by the utter resignation. She had a last word with Torby. The Doctor's forgiveness seemed to have worked a change in the man, and he expressed an eagerness to make it up with Nora. Loring watched him enter the house; then she went on her way. They were alike in disposition; they would understand each other, and their mutual forgiveness would be complete.

XIV

LORING was away for a week. Miriam met her at the station when she returned. Her first question was of Royall; then she asked about Paul.

"I have seen him only once, but he meets Royall on his way to school nearly every day. He is forcing your hand. Are you still determined to give him his way?"

"Yes; it will be easier now. Isn't it curious how Royall has taken to him?"

"They are so wonderfully alike, it would be curious if they did not take to each other. But, I beg of you, don't act hastily."

"My dear, I think I knew what would happen the day I met Agnes, but I must proceed cautiously; I want to spare her as much humiliation as I can."

"You think of everyone but yourself."

"Don't make me out a saint; I did wrong with my eyes open."

"I don't see it; you split on a quibble."

But Loring refused to continue the discussion.

That night she wrote to Redding, telling him of her plans and begging him to aid her in carrying them out.

Royall was full of his new friend.

"You like Mr. Redding?" his mother asked.

"I think he's bully. I wish I could see him in his uniform."

"So you shall soon."

"The next time he puts it on?"

Loring hesitated. "I hope so," she said; and Royall was content. But Loring found that Paul was no longer willing to submit unquestioningly to her dictates. He had replied briefly to her note, saying that the course she proposed was preposterous; that he was tired of the false situation, and that he would end it by an immediate confession to Agnes.

Loring begged for another day. He agreed to come to her house the following evening, and they would reach a decision then.

Loring carried the news to Miriam.

"Now that I am about to act, I am filled with terror. No mother ever had a dearer son. Did you ever see such beautiful hair? It's so thick and wavy; short as it is, it curls around my fingers as if it were alive. And his eyes, they are the exact shade of his hair; they're such true eyes. And his mouth—when I first met Paul, I blushed in secret, wondering what his kiss would be like—he had such an adorable mouth; and Royall's is even more kissable than his father's. He's such a manly little chap, with a will of his own, and quick tempered, but I like that; I dread these slow-to-wrath people. He's bright, too, he's doing well at school, and he never complains about his lessons. I think he's going to be musical, for he catches an air nicely, and he has the sweetest little singing voice." She caught her breath. "Ah, for ten years he has been all my own; no one can take that from me!"

"No one has a right to take him from you; he belongs to you."

"I give him to his father."

"And to the other woman."

"Don't!"

"Loring, there isn't a day when I don't begrudge giving up Frances, and yet I gave her to a good husband, and that is natural."

"Mine never was a natural situation. I planned deceit from the beginning, a secret marriage, a false name for my child; no wonder I am punished!"

"You wronged no one but yourself; it was a magnificent deception."

"We like to glorify our deeds, but in the end we have to acknowledge that simple ways are best. You see, I've accomplished nothing with my years of deceit. And confession is harder the longer we put it off."

"My dear, this is the most unusual form of the triangle that I've ever known, and I still see no sane outcome. Paul Redding will never accept this double sacrifice."

"He is a father, and he takes his son from my hands."

"Your son!"

"Miriam, I can't bear any more!" Loring hid her face. "Oh, friend David,

why couldn't you have lived a little longer?"

When Miriam left her, she wondered dully what the next step would be, but she was too utterly worn out to do more than wait for the morrow.

Redding, who made a regular thing of intercepting Royall on his way to school, was late the following morning. The boy lingered as long as he dared, but it was not until he reached the schoolhouse that he caught sight of the tall figure hurrying in his direction.

"Just in time to say good morning." Redding was breathless. He had almost run in his anxiety to see the little face raised so confidently to his. He told himself he was foolish, but the whole day seemed brighter for the few minutes' chat with his son.

"I thought you weren't coming. Don't be late tomorrow, will you?" Royall was beginning to feel that he could make demands.

"I'll meet you this afternoon after school, and take you to a ball game. Would you like to go?"

Royall's eyes glistened. "Would I? I wonder if mother'd let me?"

"Ask her at lunch; I think she will."

And so it happened that as the two were about to board a car for the ball field, Agnes crossed the street in front of them.

"Paul!" she cried. But he did not hear her. He was busy lifting Royall to the platform. She stared after them, gazing from the tanned face of the man to the ruddy face of the child. Hair, eyes, mouth—feature for feature they were alike. Who was the boy? The question bothered her for a moment; then in a flash she remembered. He was Mrs. Bryce's boy, the posthumous child who resembled his father. Then his father must have looked like Paul—but no, that was not the explanation. She reeled for a moment, and caught at the railing of the house she was passing. It was Paul's child—that was what it all meant! Allan Keep had said to her only the day before that Paul and Mrs. Bryce must have been glad to meet again and she had answered that they did not know each other. Keep had smiled as he said

that probably he had been mistaken, but he had certainly understood they were old friends. She was positive they were not, but she determined to ask Paul. Then they had gone out to dinner and to a reception afterward, and she had forgotten to put her question. Now, however, Allan Keep's smile had a deep significance. This undoubtedly was the woman Paul had held in his heart all these years, whose memory had been strong enough to shut out his wife from the innermost temple of his heart. He must have known her before their marriage; this explained why she had seen nothing of her friend since Paul had arrived, and this also explained the new trouble that had oppressed him. He loved the boy; perhaps he still loved the boy's mother.

For a moment she hated this woman who had cheated her; then her hatred died, for she realized that if these two had once cared enough for each other to defy convention and bring a living proof of their passion into the world, they must have suffered deeply. It was strange that she should have liked this woman from the beginning; instinct should have warned her. But it hadn't, and she remembered how she had even gone so far as to open her heart and lay bare her most sacred sorrow. And knowing what she did, how Loring Bryce must have laughed at her! Secure in her position as the mother of Paul's son, how she must have sneered at the woman who left him childless! His wife—was she in truth his wife? Was not his real mate the woman who had borne him a son? Her cheeks burned as she recalled the confident tone of her letter announcing that she was going to him, and his haggard appearance when he met her at Manila. Perhaps, even as she wrote, he was planning to break with her on account of the mother of his son, so that by throwing herself into his arms she had cut off all possibility of his happiness. How they must have loathed her, the usurper of a position to which another had a prior claim! Agnes pitied herself; she had been so blind. But she had not known—dear God, she had not known! It would have been kinder for Paul to have told

her the truth, even after she had arrived in the Philippines; it would have hurt, but it would have saved her this hour which was worse than death. What must she do, now that she knew? She walked on aimlessly, her brain throbbing with strange thoughts, her heart racked with terrific pain, right and wrong jumbled together in confusion. Convention, usage, morality clung to her skirts, and she tried to beat them down, to put aside her earliest lessons, for nothing in them taught her how to handle this unusual case. Unconsciously her feet led her to Loring's house, which she had never entered but once; and as she reached the foot of the steps she paused. What had she to say to this woman? She did not know, but she felt impelled to enter, to confront Loring with her own bitterly acquired knowledge. She mounted quickly and rang the bell before her impulse died.

Loring was dressing, she would be down presently; would Mrs. Redding wait? But Agnes could not wait. She scribbled a line on her card. "Let me see you at once. I have something urgent to say."

Loring's first thought was of Royall. An accident had happened, and Agnes had come to break the news to her! But no; in that case Paul would have come—unless he, too, were hurt.

Agnes dragged herself slowly up the stairs. She saw the mother fear in Loring's eyes and shook her head, but she did not speak until the maid had closed the door, shutting in two women with a common grief. Even in her misery Agnes took in at a glance the rose-tinted luxury of the room. Half a dozen pillows in fine lace-trimmed slips were heaped on the satin coverlet of the bed, as if Loring needed to woo slumber, and there was everywhere a subtle fragrance from an exquisite cluster of La France roses in a silver vase on the dressing table. These details stamped themselves upon Agnes's brain as she contrasted this room with her own simply furnished bedchamber. Then she faced the woman who had wronged her consciously and whom she had wronged in ignorance.

"I saw them together a little while ago, and I knew; but I never dreamed of such a thing before! I always felt that some woman had played a part in Paul's life when he was in New York, but how could I know it was you? Neither of you ever said you had met."

Loring gripped the back of a chair to keep herself upright. Poor Agnes, to have learned the truth like this! She and Paul had been cruel. They had been engrossed in their view of the situation, and they had overlooked the possibility of a chance revelation to Agnes.

"You saw them together." Loring hesitated a moment. "You mean Paul and Royall?"

Agnes shrank as if to ward off the blow; then she, too, straightened with fresh courage. "Yes. I came to you at once. It was a great shock. You see, it means the readjusting of my whole world. But I want to do what is right. If I give Paul up, will you marry him? I see now I must have come between you long ago, but I did it unconsciously; you believe that, don't you? I am thinking of Paul, of his happiness!" This was not what she had planned to say, but she could not arraign this white faced woman. She, too, had suffered, and her suffering extended over a long period of years. She suddenly saw what she conceived to be her duty, and she was not one to shrink from its performance, no matter how unpleasant it might be.

Loring's heart warmed toward the woman who stood in her place. Agnes also was capable of sacrifice; she had not misjudged her. If she told the truth now, Agnes would repudiate Paul; she would refuse to continue in a position to which she had no right. Loring had planned to make a clean breast of everything, to have done with deceit, to end the long lie that had held her soul in shadow; but she saw now that this was not the time to speak. She must leave that to Paul. He could go on with the story when she was established at Woodsmere. Agnes was humiliated; Loring must restore her self-respect. Agnes was in the mood to be generous;

Loring must allow her to be the one to stoop. She must cloud her own good name to insure Agnes's peace. It was but one more step along the bitter path of expiation, and she set her teeth to keep from flinching.

"How I have made you suffer! No, that is not the way to untangle this web. Paul does not need me to make him happy; he needs Royall."

"It is the same thing, isn't it?"

"No."

Agnes was startled. "What do you mean?"

Loring made her offer. Royall should go to live with them, a visitor at first, so as to make things easier for the boy, who would become a member of the family in time; and by degrees she would efface herself. Little by little his affections would put out new shoots till they strangled the old ties.

Agnes listened, a puzzled look on her face. When Loring spoke of the work she was to do at Woodsmere, she brightened sympathetically, but she did not seem able to grasp the fact that Loring was also bent on sacrifice, and that she would win.

"I've never been a mother, but I don't believe you can do this thing," she said slowly.

"Will you be a mother now? Will you love Paul's son for his own sake?"

"I can't love him as you do. I did not carry him about with me; I did not give him birth in pain and sorrow."

"Agnes!" Loring stretched out her hands impulsively and drew the other woman to her. "You will bring up my son as if he were your own, and I shall know by that that the wrong I did you is atoned for." Her voice broke, and the two women sobbed in each other's arms.

Afterward, when they were both calmer, Loring touched gently on the past. She told of her love for Paul, of her heart hunger and of the brief stolen happiness to which she had no right, since he was betrothed to Agnes; but she kept to herself the fact that she had been Paul's wife. Then she talked of David Hoffman and his influence in her life; and finally she led the conversation again to Royall. She had planned

many things for his future; but she would leave the consummation of these plans to Agnes and to Paul. And Agnes Redding listened with sympathy and understanding, and though the situation was an abnormal one, these two met it normally.

When it was time for father and son to return, Loring interrupted her narrative. "I must get into a gown. You will stay, and we shall tell Paul together." She used his name simply—and Agnes felt no jealousy. The stress of the hour had lifted her above little things. She was so bewildered that she had only a vague curiosity as to how Paul would take the announcement. She watched Loring dress, wondering that she should take such pains with her personal appearance, when nothing really mattered except the scene they had been through. But Loring went through the ordinary details of her toilet, though her heart was breaking and her mind far away. When she turned from her mirror, Agnes gave her ungrudging admiration. She was still a lovely woman, but what had her beauty brought her? Only sin and sorrow and self-sacrifice.

They descended to the library, and Loring ordered tea, but neither woman did more than pretend to sip from a cup.

"When Mr. Redding comes, show him in here, and send Royall upstairs," said Loring, and then they waited, glancing from time to time at the clock.

A sharp ring startled them both.

"Paul!" murmured Agnes, and Loring nodded. Her moment had come.

They heard his joyous tones in the hall, his good-bye to Royall, a hearty laugh echoed by a boyish peal ridiculously like the man's tone, and then his step along the hall.

Paul crossed the threshold, and glanced from Agnes to Loring. He had come in with content in his face, but as he noted the traces of tears that still lingered on Agnes's cheeks, the light faded from his eyes. It was the only time he had seen them together, and his heart stood still. He recognized a climax, and he was prepared to meet it, but he had no pleasure in it. He was

not a man willingly to wound a woman, and in this crisis one woman was bound to suffer.

Loring saw the look in his eyes, and she took the initiative. "Paul," she began, her heart yearning toward him in this final hour. "Agnes saw you with Royall, and she guessed he was your son. I am going on with Dr. Hoffman's work in the mountains, and I shall have no time for private relations, so I am asking you to take Royall." She reached out suddenly and caught at Agnes's hand, for by the look that came into Paul Redding's face she knew she had been right. He was a father first, a lover afterward.

"You mean you wish to give him up to me?" He spoke quickly.

"To you, and to your wife." She emphasized the last word, and he grasped her meaning. Then it came to him suddenly that it had always been Loring who had lifted him to heights, that her love had wrapped him about with a great shield, that she had always gone ahead showing him the way. She had stood between him and dishonor, and now she offered him the desire of his heart, though to reach it he must step across her prostrate body.

"Ah, no, we dare not accept," he said.

Loring threw back her head, her features illumined by a glow of spiritual exaltation. "I give him to you freely," she said. "I no longer have a son, only a memory!"



YESTERDAY AND TODAY

By Henry Eastman Lower

'TWIXT quiet midnight and the lonely dawn
 I dream alone of my love's destiny.
 Through mist and storm and far away I see
 The form whose soul is my heart's Helicon,
 As fresh as spring when winter's gray has gone,
 As variously enchanting as the sea,
 With its sad-sweet, myriad-winged melody—
 The maid I shall bestow my love upon.

Ah, youth and change! For change must come to youth,
 Like clouds of sorrow to a wide-eyed boy;
 And what seemed yesterday a miracle of truth
 Today is but a half-remembered joy.
 Then does it seem so marvelously strange
 That naught is permanent in life but change?



A WOMAN'S problem is what to wear—man's how to get it.

THE VALLEY OF OLD SONGS

By Paul Scott Mowrer

D^{EEP} In the moonlighted vale ran the stream, between willows and rushes,
In whispers and hushes;
Steep
Stood the turreted rocks above ruins of temples, vine-covered,
Dimly discovered.
Fear
I had none, though the spot wept with dew, and was weirdly unwonted,
Silent and haunted.
Near,
Like a crowd of white specters, the mist from the river came stealing,
Halting and reeling.
Then
From the mist a lute sounded, and looking, I saw the pale features
Of unearthly creatures.
Men
Never moved in such rhythm, nor women; nor ever white drapery
Fluttered so vapory.
Some,
In an excess of grief, uttered low lamentation, and kneeling,
Bent toward me, appealing;
Dumb
Others were, but their eyes—ah, their eyes with a passion unuttered
Smoldered and fluttered.
One
Had a lute at his breast, and the touch of his hand, as he fingered,
Faltered and lingered.
None
But was dreamily weaving a measure in time to the playing,
Bending and swaying.
Sighs
Of a distant cascade seemed to summon them into the mountains
Unto its fountains.
Eyes
Of a sudden I felt were upon me, all wistful and yearning.
Up started I, burning.
“Ye—
Who are ye?” I cried out, as I sprang toward the hesitant dancer.
Faintly the answer:
“We
Are the wraiths of old songs in the hearts of dead poets begotten,
Dead and forgotten.”

THE WORTHLESS CHEQUE

By Elliott Flower

MISS HELEN HAYES, stenographer, was alone in the real estate office of Walter D. Rayne, and it is a sad commentary upon Mr. Rayne's success in his chosen field that she was busy with needle and thread instead of with notebook and typewriter. Thus she was usually occupied, however. Indeed, friends of Mr. Rayne often wondered, and sometimes asked him, why he kept a stenographer at all. He had about as much use for one as he had for a gramophone or a sewing machine, they asserted. Which might be true, he admitted, but Miss Hayes was a nice girl and it would be a shame to discharge her.

"Fact is," he insisted, "I really could not get along without her now." And there was more of truth in this than one expects to find in a real estate office.

Anyhow, Miss Hayes remained, and there was so little to be done in a business way that she had ample time to perfect herself in many fancy stitches. Even the telephone bell seldom rang, and it was hardly twice a day that she had to tell a caller that Rayne was out but would return soon. For Rayne was in and out all day long, seeking to stir up a little new business or accomplish something with the old.

This particular afternoon, as Miss Hayes busied herself with some embroidery, Nathan J. Corbus looked in. Mr. Corbus was also in the real estate business, but he differed from Rayne in that he had wealthy clients and was prosperous. He also differed from Rayne in the matter of age, there being some twenty-five years of life between them, with Corbus in the lead. But in one respect they differed not at all: both of

them were of the opinion that Miss Helen Hayes was the most desirable stenographer in the city. True, Corbus knew nothing of her work with machine or pencil, but he had seen something of her loyalty to her employer, which was a good point, and he was not blind to her beauty and personal charm, which he may have considered of more importance than any facility in pounding the keys. At any rate, he had attempted on one or two occasions to lure her from the office of Rayne to the offices of Corbus & Cooper.

"I just dropped in, Miss Hayes," he explained, after a hasty glance had assured him that Rayne was absent, "to say that my offer for the option on the Orton property is withdrawn."

"Yes?" she returned indifferently. This air of indifference always annoyed him, and so she always assumed it. An exasperated man is likely to talk more freely than a cool one.

"Yes," he asserted, carefully depositing his considerable bulk on a chair. "Rayne was a fool not to take it. He only paid five hundred for the option and I offered him a thousand for it. He could have cleared five hundred as easy as not, but now he's lost his chance."

"Five hundred isn't much," she suggested.

He laughed. "That's just like a woman," he declared. "There never was a woman who could reason in figures. Can't you see that the difference between five hundred lost and five hundred made is a thousand dollars?"

"Oh, yes, I can see that," she replied; "but he needs more."

"I guess you're right there!" His laugh was sinister now. "He's in too

deep for an additional five hundred to do much good, but it's better to make it than to lose it."

"Perhaps he won't lose it," she ventured.

That was extremely aggravating to a man as certain of his ground as Corbus was, and he spoke with some heat. "He hasn't a chance," he asserted. "He can't swing this deal, but I could. I know where I can get forty thousand for the property, but they're not paying any forty thousand to Rayne. They don't have to. They know his option expires at noon tomorrow, and they can get it for less—at least, they think they can," he added significantly.

"Can't they?" she asked.

He hesitated, as if doubtful of the wisdom of saying more; but he apparently decided that he had nothing to fear, and there were reasons why he was especially anxious to make her understand the situation.

"Why, I have this deal all sewed up, Miss Hayes," he explained impressively. "It can't get away from me. I have a second option on the property—at a higher figure than Rayne's, it's true, but still considerably under forty thousand. It would be a little something additional in my pocket if I could get his option for a thousand, but I'm in for a good profit anyway."

"Why withdraw your offer, then?" she persisted.

"He's too damn—beg pardon—obstinate!" he exclaimed. "He needs a lesson, and I'm willing to lose a little something to see him go up."

"Perhaps he won't go up," she suggested with aggravating placidity.

"Won't go up!" snorted Corbus. "Why, he'll hit the stars. I know how he's fixed. I've made it my business to know. He's in up to his neck—everything he's got, which isn't much, mortgaged to the limit, and his unsecured creditors getting nervous. They'll all jump on him the minute one of them moves, and then—"

"Well?"

His voice softened, and he assumed what he probably thought was an ingratiating smile. "There'll be a

stenographer looking for a job," he said.

"Perhaps," she admitted.

He studied her face for a moment, but found it quite impassive. "Look here, Miss Hayes," he exclaimed, "why do you stick to a dead one? Loyalty is all right, but what's the use of sacrificing your own interests when there's no hope? You're worth ten a week more to Corbus & Cooper than Rayne pays you."

"You don't know what he pays me," she remarked.

"No matter," he returned; "I'll raise it ten. I have an idea he stands you off most of the time anyway, but I'll pay you ten more than he promises to pay."

She shook her head.

"I know what I'm talking about," he insisted. "He can't last thirty days. I can prove it to you." He leaned over and suggested insinuatingly: "What do you say to a nice little dinner somewhere tonight where we can talk it over quietly?"

"No," she answered with decision. "It's quite out of the question. As a matter of fact, Mr. Corbus, you don't know as much of the situation here as you think you do."

"As a matter of fact," he retorted, disgruntled by the rebuff, "I probably know more than you do."

Half an hour later Rayne returned and seated himself at his desk with the weary air of a discouraged man. "Nothing doing," he said in answer to her look of inquiry. "Any news here?"

"Mr. Corbus was in," she replied.

"What did he want?" he demanded.

"Me," she answered demurely.

"Some day," he announced with heat, "I'm going to take a club to Corbus."

"He made a blind offer of ten a week more than I am getting here," she explained.

Rayne looked at her doubtfully for a moment, and then laughed uproariously. "That's a good joke!" he declared.

"He also withdrew his offer for your option on the Orton property," she went on.

"Anything else?" he asked.

"He said you were due to smash up inside of thirty days," she answered.

"Too much time," he commented ruefully. "Make it a week—or less."

"But," she added, "he dropped one or two bits of information of some value."

He was instantly alert. "Such as what?" he queried.

"The Acme people want the Orton property."

He shook his head hopelessly. "That's what I thought when I paid five hundred dollars for a sixty-day option on it at twenty-five thousand. I thought they not only wanted it but actually had to have it for the extension of their plant. But they just laughed at me when I put it up to them."

"Just the same, they want it," she declared; "and they have such need of it that they'll pay forty thousand rather than lose it. I got that much out of Mr. Corbus. He didn't mention the name, of course, but it couldn't be anybody else."

Rayne leaned back in his chair and scowled at the ceiling for a moment or so. "Yes, yes," he commented musingly, "I begin to understand now. They knew that I was not financially able to swing the deal, except on the option; and two months wasn't long to wait. No one else has any special use for it just now, and a little patience and clever work would enable them to get it at pretty much their own price after my option expires. Yes, it's quite clear now. Corbus must have got an inside tip, but he ought to have been willing to pay more for my option."

"Mr. Corbus has a second option," she explained, "that becomes operative the moment yours expires. The Acme people probably wouldn't feel so comfortable if they knew that."

Rayne gave a low whistle, and a moment later got up and began to pace the floor, talking to himself rather than to his stenographer, although his remarks seemed in part addressed to her.

"I might put it up to the Acme people," he said, "but what good would it do? They'd have the whip hand, and could play off Corbus against me and me against Corbus. About the best I could expect would be to come out even, and I might slip up at that. Besides, I've got to do better or bust. Lord, if I only had

the cash to close the deal I'd pull out a wad that would be worth while!"

"It would take five thousand dollars to do it, wouldn't it?" interrupted Miss Hayes.

"Forty-five hundred," answered Rayne. "I can close for a cash payment of five thousand, including the option money, the balance to be paid in three, six, nine and twelve months. That first payment would jar the Acme people to life! They'd get busy in a hurry!"

"Well," she remarked, "there's over forty-five hundred in the bank."

"Didn't you send that three thousand to New York?" he asked quickly.

She nodded toward a letter lying on her desk. "It hasn't been mailed yet," she said.

He hesitated just a moment, then shook his head. "It's got to go," he asserted. "I've hung off until the last minute because—well, you know why. I didn't want to use this money, but it's got to go now. You know what Myers said."

She nodded.

"Cheque by return mail or he'll come down on us like a thousand of brick," he went on. "He means it, too, and I don't know that I blame him. I'd be peevish myself if anybody held me off as I've held him—never anything but a plea for more time. Anyhow, he means what he says, and the grand explosion will follow close on the first suit. Oh, it's got to go, but if I only had the use of that money—"

"For how long?" she asked.

He laughed bitterly. "It wouldn't make any difference," he said, "if it were only a day. I've reached the limit with Myers."

"It might," she insisted.

"Oh, of course, that's an exaggeration," he admitted. "As a matter of fact, we'd be all right if we could be sure of putting it through in three days, for it will take that long for the cheque to get back, but there's small chance of that. We can't afford to appear anxious; we've got to wait for the Acme people to move, and they're likely to take a day or two to think it over."

"Are you satisfied that the Acme people really want the property?" she queried.

"You've got a pretty good business head, Helen," he returned. "What do you think?"

"I think they do," she answered, after brief consideration.

"And I think what Corbus said clinches it," he asserted. "Nobody else could want it at forty thousand. And they want it the worst kind of a way if they want it at all. I was a fool not to see through their game in the first place. If I could have a week or ten days now—" He broke off abruptly with an exclamation of disgust. "Think of being so tied up that you can't swing five thousand for ten days when there's two or three times that amount in sight!" he cried petulantly.

Miss Hayes picked up a pad and pencil and did a little figuring.

"Do you think you could put it through in ten days?" she asked.

"Yes," he answered, and then added: "No certainty, of course, but it's a fair risk in seven and a good one in ten—a very good one in ten. And it's about the only chance left."

She reached over and tore up the letter. "Go ahead," she said in a tone that indicated more than a mere stenographer's interest in the matter. "I'll give you ten days."

"What do you mean?" he exclaimed.

"Don't bother me with questions," was her surprisingly impatient reply. "I have some interest in this, haven't I?"

"Yes," he admitted.

"I've kept the books, made the deposits and drawn most of the cheques, and I probably have a little better understanding of the financial end of this business than you have," she went on. "Leave it to me. You can have the use of the money in bank for ten days. Go ahead with the Orton deal and don't worry about Myers. He'll wait."

He was mystified, but he acquiesced, after some hesitation. What she said was quite true. She had that rare possession for a woman, a good business head, and she had made such excellent

use of it that she had become increasingly valuable to him. Indeed, she was already handling most of the minor and some of the major details of the business, and she had acquired a knowledge of the technicalities of business procedure that had been helpful to him on several occasions. True, she never had asked him to act thus blindly before, but what of that? There was nothing else for him to do anyway. He was "tied up" financially. He had foolishly gone in too deep, not alone in the Orton deal but in several others, and through the Orton deal only could he hope to get out. If he could swing that, there would be money to handle the others; if he could not, there was no hope at all. It was worth the risk.

"All right, Helen," he agreed. "It looks to me like a long chance, but there's no other way out. You'll have to get busy with Myers today, though."

"Leave Myers to me," she returned. "You get busy with the Orton deal. The sooner that's closed the sooner the Acme people will hear of it, and the sooner they hear of it the sooner we're likely to hear from them."

She took some books and pamphlets from her desk as soon as he was gone, carefully putting the fancy work away at the same time. It was like turning deliberately and purposefully from domesticity to business, for the books and pamphlets all dealt with business topics. As a matter of fact, Miss Helen Hayes had supplemented her practical experience with a course in a business college, and these were the books and pamphlets she had used in that course. She had no particular use for them now, having previously studied them to such purpose that she could almost recite them backward, but they seemed a little more appropriate than needlework to her present task. One likes to get into the atmosphere of what one is doing, and the atmosphere of business had been only occasionally noticeable in Walter D. Rayne's office for some time. He had been working, of course, but it had been mostly outside work with little in the way of office results.

She was quite absorbed in an article

on banking methods when Nathan J. Corbus returned. Mr. Corbus had an excellent excuse for returning at this time. Possibly, if one could have looked into his mind, it would have been discovered that the real reason was something entirely different from the excuse, but it was a good excuse just the same.

"It occurs to me, Miss Hayes," said Corbus, "that my offer for the option on the Orton property was made in writing, and a verbal withdrawal of it, especially through a third party, might not be binding in case Rayne decided to ignore it and make a tender on the original offer. So I have put the withdrawal in writing."

He tossed an envelope on her desk, and she promptly slipped it into a drawer. "Sorry you went to so much unnecessary trouble, Mr. Corbus," she said. "Mr. Rayne's option is not for sale."

Corbus laughed. "He may think differently about that tomorrow," he returned, "when he finds he's up against it hard; and," he added significantly, "you may take a different view of my proposition when you see how inevitable the crash is. Why go down with the wreck?"

"Is it your custom, Mr. Corbus," she asked, "to offer salaried positions to partners in a going business?"

"To—to—what?" he faltered, disconcerted.

"Partners," she repeated. "I am a partner here—a silent partner, but a partner just the same." Corbus was too astonished to frame an immediate reply, so she went on: "It is really none of your business whether I am a stenographer or a partner, but I want you to see the absurdity of trying to hire me away. It has become rather annoying, and this seems the only way to stop it."

That was sharp enough to have silenced most men, but Corbus was not sensitive and it merely irritated him. Besides, for business reasons, he wished to know more of the conditions thus unexpectedly disclosed.

"Wheedled you out of your money to stave off the crash!" he commented.

"He wheedled me out of nothing," she retorted.

"Well, he got it," asserted Corbus. "How much was it?"

"That," she said, "is my affair."

"Oh, it's none of my business, of course," he hastened to assure her, "except as I am interested in you. I was merely wondering—"

"I don't think you need concern yourself for me," she interrupted coldly. "I am quite satisfied with the situation and the outlook. You see, we closed the Orton deal on our option today."

"You couldn't do it!" he exclaimed, startled.

She motioned toward the telephone. "If you are sufficiently interested," she suggested, "you might ring up the Orton people and ask them about it."

"Oh, I don't doubt you," he protested quickly, "but—but—"

"But it rather shocked you to find that you had reason to concern yourself with your own affairs rather than with mine," she remarked.

That did not serve to restore his composure, and he could only add in a bewildered way: "Still, I don't see—"

"It isn't necessary that you should," she interrupted again. She had him groping now and had the wit to hold her advantage. "We know what we're doing," she went on, "and you know that your second option has gone aglimmering. That's enough."

"He couldn't do it!" he persisted doggedly. "He's all tied up—I investigated—I know it! There's something queer—"

"Did you investigate *me*?" she asked.

"Why, no—"

"Then you don't know anything about the resources of this firm."

Corbus, recovering from this double surprise, got a grip on himself now. "No," he said, "I didn't investigate you. I didn't suppose you had anything. It never occurred to me that anybody with anything would be working as a stenographer in a one-horse real estate office, and I don't believe now that you had more than barely enough to make a sufficient payment to hold the option. Still, I'll pay you a thou-

sand dollars bonus and take the deal off your hands right now."

She shook her head.

"Put it up to Rayne," he urged.

"I'm speaking for the firm," she replied.

"Two thousand bonus," he offered.

"Please don't joke, Mr. Corbus," she returned.

That was enough for him, and he left, growling over his own discomfiture, and at the same time assuring himself that "She's a mighty smart girl—smart and pretty, which is uncommon."

She was quite jubilant when Rayne returned with the information that he had closed the deal and was now ready for negotiations with the Acme people. "And time is precious," he added. "I wish I could think of some indirect way of getting a tip to them immediately."

"Oh, that's all right," she returned.

"Mr. Corbus was in again."

"Damn Corbus!" he exclaimed irritably.

"Why?" she asked. "He's been quite convenient, and he won't bother us any more. I told him I was a partner here. His efforts to hire me away gave me a good excuse for doing that, you know."

"Anything else?" he queried dubiously.

"Why, yes," she answered; "about everything else that I thought would have a tendency to disturb him—that I'd put some capital into the business, that we'd closed on our option, that his second option has gone a-glimmering, and that we know just what we're going to do with the property. Then I proved it by refusing a two thousand cash bonus for the deal just as it stands."

"Whew!" he exclaimed. "You must have had him going some!"

"Yes," she returned, "I think I had him going straight to the Acme people when he left."

He nodded. "Sure," he agreed. "There might be a good stroke of business in rushing that tip to them—provided they don't know that he tried to flimflam both of us. And it tells them just enough for our purpose. Wise girl! We'll sit down and wait for them to move now."

But they seemed in no hurry to move. It was not because Corbus did not go to them promptly, however, for he did just what he was expected to do, and the news he brought was sufficient to hold Boden, the vice-president and general manager, at his desk for a long time after his usual hour for leaving. And Boden was worried. The Acme company had need of that property, but had hoped to acquire it quietly through a third party. The Rayne option had interfered with this plan, and the company, learning something of the situation, had deemed it the part of wisdom to wait. Apparently, if properly indifferent, it would still have a chance to acquire the property according to the original plan. Now, however, that seemed altogether out of the question. Rayne, in spite of the indifferent and almost scornful attitude of the Acme company when he had tried to sell to it under his option, had secured the necessary cash and gone ahead with the deal.

"Was any mention made of us?" asked Boden.

"None," replied Corbus.

Boden reflected. "Do you suppose he could have anybody else in mind?" was his next question.

"Who could it be?" demanded Corbus.

"I don't know," answered Boden, "but you never can tell. I can't see that anyone else has immediate use for it, unless for investment, but—"

"Would any mere investor go over my two thousand bonus?" interrupted Corbus.

"Hardly, hardly," admitted Boden; "nor even, in all probability, a company looking for a new site. I can't see that it's worth more than that to anyone but us. By the way, Corbus," he added significantly, "it looks a good deal as if you had planned to hold us up."

"All in the way of business," laughed Corbus; "I'm on your side of the fence now."

"I can't make it out," mused Boden. "We turned him down cold when he tried to sell under his option, and yet he goes ahead with the deal. I can't see anybody else, but I can't understand his

course unless there is. It looks serious."

"Leave it to me," advised Corbus.

"What's your plan?" asked Boden.

"Sit down and wait," replied Corbus. "If he isn't after you, I'll find it out in time for you to come out in the open and bid for the property. If he is, make him come to you. Then turn him down just as you did before. That will give me a chance to step in and get it from him at a reasonable price. He'll have to let go. It's a cinch that every penny he's got is tied up in the deal, and he can't afford to carry it long. I'll find out about that, too."

Boden considered this thoughtfully for several minutes.

"He'll never let it go without giving you a chance to bid on it anyway," persisted Corbus. "He'd be a fool to do it."

"Find out what you can and come in tomorrow," instructed Boden in the decisive way he had when his mind was made up. "It's too late to do anything tonight anyway."

Boden, it may be said in passing, was more than ordinarily worried, for the plan of campaign that now promised to end so disastrously was his own, and the mere money involved was as nothing compared with the fact that Boden, the astute, would be personally responsible if the Acme company had to pay more for the land than it could have bought it for when the Rayne option was first offered. And Rayne was reasonably modest in his demands then. So the favorable report that Corbus brought the next day was a great relief.

"Only paid five thousand down, and is carrying the rest in mortgage notes," declared Corbus. "My second option gave me an opening, so there wasn't much trouble in getting the facts. It's too big a load for him, and I can't find that anybody else is giving the property a pleasant look."

"But you're not sure of that?" questioned Boden.

"Reasonably sure," replied Corbus. "There can't be an absolute certainty, of course."

"And yet he turned down your two thousand bonus," suggested Boden.

"Wants more," returned Corbus. "Thinks you were bluffing, as you were, and he's after you. Just sit down and wait."

So it happened that Boden and Rayne each sat down to wait for the other to make the next move, and thus two days passed. By the third day both were anxious. Boden reasoned that there really was another deal on or he would have heard from Rayne, and Rayne reasoned that the Acme company really did not care for the property or he would have had some word from Boden. Corbus had lost a little of his confidence, too, but he tried not to show it; and even Miss Hayes did not smile quite so hopefully.

"Perhaps," Corbus casually suggested on that third day, "it might be a good plan for me to drop in at Rayne's office and renew my offer. Whatever he says ought to throw a little additional light on the situation, and he may be ready to accept now."

"Go ahead," acquiesced Boden.

At just about the same time Rayne was remarking gloomily that it looked like a hard winter. "Three days," he said, "and not a word from the Acme people. I guess we made a mistake."

"It is possible, although it seems hardly probable," she returned, "that Mr. Corbus did not go to them at all."

"But they must have heard of it by this time anyway," he argued.

"One would think so," she admitted, "if they are watching the property."

"Well, I've got to know mighty sudden," he declared.

"Tomorrow," she advised.

"Yes, tomorrow," he agreed. "That's the last minute we can wait. Then, if they don't want it, I've got to see if anybody else does, and only six days left. It's like sitting on a keg of powder with a dynamite fuse attached. I shudder every time I think of Myers. How did you fix that, Helen?"

"You've got enough to worry you in your end of the deal," she returned.

"If you begin to worry about mine you'll be in no condition to do business with Mr. Corbus or Mr. Boden when the time

comes, and that's going to take all your wit and nerve."

"But I want to know," he insisted.

She looked at him quizzically for a moment. "Why," she said, "I'll have to admit that I forgot to do anything about that Monday."

"Great Scott!" he exclaimed.

"Of course," she went on, "I knew he'd be expecting the cheque Wednesday, for that's when a Monday letter from here would naturally reach him; so I wired him Wednesday morning: 'Cheque mailed today.' No one is going to make trouble when a cheque is on the way, you know."

He had to smile, but it was a rueful smile. "That's clever, Helen, so far as it goes," he said. "I can see where it gains us two days, but how about Wednesday?"

"Oh, I mailed him a cheque then, as I said I would," she replied.

He was very sober now. "I don't see how that's going to help us," he frowned. "That cheque will reach him tomorrow, Friday, and it will get back to the bank—"

"Not for another week, at least," she interrupted.

"I don't see how—"

He stopped there, for the door opened and the big form of Corbus appeared in the doorway. He was so welcome, so very welcome, that, in spite of the fact that they personally disliked him, they could have embraced him—that is, almost. It was to them a sign of weakening on the part of the enemy, for they had no manner of doubt now that Corbus had gone straight to the Acme people with his report and came now from them.

"Just dropped in," said Corbus, "to see if my bonus for the Orton property looks any better to you now."

"What was your offer, Mr. Corbus?" asked Rayne innocently.

"Why, I told Miss Hayes a few days ago," replied Corbus in surprise, as he deposited his bulk in a chair, "that I'd pay two thousand bonus and take the whole deal off your hands. The situation has changed somewhat since then," he went on, "and I'd hardly feel justi-

fied in repeating that offer, but I think I can see where it would be worth one thousand to me."

"Well," returned Rayne thoughtfully, "we might consider fifteen thousand."

"What!" thundered Corbus.

"That's the price," insisted Rayne. "We get it for twenty-five thousand, and we think it's worth forty."

"Oh, talk sense!" pleaded Corbus.

"Unless it's worth forty to you," retorted Rayne, "don't let's talk at all."

Miss Hayes was looking at Rayne and nodding approval. Corbus rose wearily and moved to the door, where he paused. "I *might* think of thirty," he suggested.

Miss Hayes found sudden need of straightening out some papers on Rayne's desk. "Keep your nerve!" she breathed. But the caution was unnecessary.

"We can get forty for it—perhaps more," said Rayne.

Corbus snorted scornfully and left.

If he could have seen what happened when the door closed it might have been worth some money to him. Rayne jumped from his chair, and he and his stenographer waltzed joyously until they were both out of breath and two chairs had been upset. Their excited but suppressed exclamations finally settled into a sort of chant, "We've got him! We've got him!" repeated over and over again.

"Do the Acme people want it?" laughed Rayne. "Well, rather!"

"Will they come out into the open now?" added Miss Hayes. "Well, probably!"

But the Acme people did not. Boden, still fearful that their reasoning might be at fault somewhere, was ready to do so, but Corbus dissuaded him. "They're after you," insisted Corbus. "They'd make no such price otherwise. Keep in the background, appear indifferent and let 'em wait a little longer. They'll be more tractable then. There's still another move for us to make, anyway." And he explained at length what it was.

So the Acme people did not come into the open, but the *Star* next morning had a brief article of exceeding great interest

to Rayne and Miss Hayes. It announced that the Acme company was about to build a branch factory at a point some two hundred miles distant. Not a word of any difficulty in securing land for an extension of its present factory, though. Oh, dear, no! That would have been too transparent altogether. The reason was that it had a large market for its products in the vicinity of this new location, and a big saving in freight charges would result from building a branch factory there instead of enlarging the main plant. The *Evening Blade* contained an interview with Boden, in which that gentleman regretted that the news had leaked out prematurely, but intimated, without positively asserting, that the statement was correct.

Rayne and Miss Hayes were sore troubled, for the articles had a truthful ring. The reason given was a plausible one. The slightest hint of any difficulty in securing land for an extension of their old plant would have made it look like a bluff, but there was not a word to suggest that they had ever even thought of such a thing. Could it be possible, Rayne and Miss Hayes asked each other, that Corbus was not representing the Acme company but really had some other deal in view? If so—

"Oh, well," exclaimed Rayne at this point, "we've got to stand pat now. There's no chance to put anything else through in the time we've got."

"No chance," agreed Miss Hayes; "but, on the chance that it's a bluff, we might try the newspaper game ourselves."

They did, with the result that the *Star* of Saturday had an article about a possible new industry for the town. A company, not named, was negotiating for a site, but the deal was not yet closed, and until it was no definite announcement as to the company or its plans could be made. Indefinite as it was, it brought Corbus and Boden into conference in a hurry.

"What do you think of that?" asked Boden.

"What do you think of it?" returned Corbus.

"It looks bad to me," replied Boden.

"Of course it may have no reference to this Rayne business at all. Again, it may be that Rayne is merely calling our bluff, having seen through it. But there's a chance that somebody is after that property. It looks bad to me."

"Nobody else would pay that price for it," argued Corbus. "As good a site could be had for less."

"Quite likely," agreed Boden. "That might explain why he's holding them off until he sees what he can do with us. Anyhow, if he has another offer there's danger in delay."

"It can't be over thirty thousand," insisted Corbus, "and he'll certainly give us another chance at less than forty before he closes with anybody else. Sit tight and wait a day or so longer."

Boden agreed reluctantly. The reasoning seemed good, but still there was at least some risk of losing the property, and the Acme company needed it.

So Monday came, with everybody waiting. Seven days from the receipt of that peremptory letter from Myers! The delayed cheque should reach the bank this day, and Rayne still knew of no reason why it would not. He had asked about it two or three times, but Miss Hayes had refused to make any further explanation, advising him to attend to his own end of the business, and that end had proved sufficiently worrying to hold his attention pretty closely. Now he asked about it again.

"Why, do you know," she laughed, "I made the oddest mistake you ever heard of! I inadvertently sent Myers an unsigned cheque for the full amount of his claim. Of course no one is going to make trouble when all he has to do is to send the cheque back for signature. It came this morning, and he's really quite cross about it—says these mistakes are beginning to look queer to him! I guess we can't afford to make another. I'll mail him a real cheque today."

Amazement and admiration were blended in the look that Rayne gave her. "And it can't get back until Friday," he said. "Helen, you're a wonder! And you made some clever plays on my end of the deal, too! I think I'd better turn

the business over to you and take up stenography and typewriting myself."

"Oh, no," she returned, smiling; "you're all right in real business, but it takes a woman to think of odd little subterfuges and deceptions. She's had to do it from the beginning."

Let us review hastily the humiliations that fell to the lot of Corbus in the closing scenes of this little comedy—not because of any sympathy for him, but because he's worth no more space. He called Tuesday and renewed his offer of thirty thousand, which was promptly refused. It was merely a question of time now, for they felt sure of their ground otherwise, and Rayne, taking courage from the eyes of his partner kept his nerve. Corbus went by thousand-dollar jumps to thirty-five thousand; and he was then informed that the price was positively forty thousand, and he could have just twenty-four hours to take it at that price. Wednesday Corbus returned and closed at forty thousand. Thursday the Acme Company took over the property, paying therefor twenty thousand dollars in cash and assuming the twenty thousand dollars of mortgage notes. Thursday, also, Rayne and his pretty partner did a little more waltzing in the office, and then took a half-holiday.

A week later Corbus had other business with Rayne and noticed a change in the office.

"Got a new stenographer," he remarked. "What's become of Miss Hayes?"

"Oh, she quit," replied Rayne.

"Retire from the firm, too?" asked Corbus.

"Oh, yes," answered Rayne. "She merely put in a little legacy of five thousand she'd received to help me put through the Orton deal."

"Well, say," exclaimed Corbus, "I'd like to get hold of her. She's a wonder for both looks and business, and I could give her a place worth while. You don't happen to know where she is, do you?"

"Why, yes," replied Rayne. "Just run up to my house and ask for Mrs. Rayne. She's been Mrs. Rayne for three months, you know, but insisted upon keeping right along on the stenographic job until I could get fairly on my feet. Mighty loyal little woman, Corbus!"

But Corbus was already closing the door behind him, and nothing but his corpulence prevented him from kicking himself all the way back to his own office. "Trying to hire a man's wife away from him!" he growled. "What a joke I must have been!"



MRS. FIJJIT—How do you account for the fact that a woman can make a dollar go further than a man can?

FIJJIT—I guess it must be because she makes it go faster.



COOK—The Irish stew has burned.

RESTAURANT PROPRIETOR—Well, put some spice in it and add "*à la française*" to its name.

MADEMOISELLE MIMI

By Olive M. Briggs

DOCTOR MÉNARD'S little dinners were famous. Every month he gave one. In the picturesque rooms adjoining the hospital, where he had his own quarters, waited on by his old French servant, they were the most *intime*, the most coveted functions in Paris. Not for the outer social world, of course, but among the inner circle of thinkers and workers, which to the cultured Parisian is the Paris that counts.

There were never more than four present, mostly men, seldom women; and the red ribbon was common in the buttonhole, at least in the case of Frenchmen. But on the night of which I speak, strangely enough as it happened, the gathering was cosmopolitan. Barry was an American lawyer, a man of great distinction. Taglioni was an impresario, who had made a name for himself in Milan. I myself am a painter, and art has no nationality. So the ribbon was only on the Doctor.

During the early part of the dinner the conversation had been rather professional. The Doctor had been telling us the case of a well known *littérateur*, one of the greatest writers in France, who had come to him for treatment, to be cured of dipsomania. Naturally, no name had been mentioned, for the thing was a dead secret. The tale was so tragic, so terrible, that a silence had fallen suddenly. The fruit course was just being passed. I shall always remember that moment. Barry helped himself to a mandarin. He began to peel it slowly, scenting the fragrant skin as he did so.

"Like a whiff of the South," he said thoughtfully. "Never see them or smell them that they don't take me back to

Italy! Curious thing that, Doctor. How little one knows of the real lives of some of these famous people! Biographies, autobiographies, letters, diaries—bah! They tell what they like; turn a certain front to the world with a search-light on it, and the rest is blank. A mystery impenetrable as the ocean in a fog. The real truth—I suppose that's so about most of us—it links the lies together like the keystone of an arch. If one could only dislodge it!"

"If you did, you would get the surprise of your life," said the Doctor; "and just for that reason it's never safe to meddle. The mysteries of bridge construction are as a-b-c in comparison to the inner workings of a human being. I never run across a new personality, a strong, distinctive, odd one, apart from the type, a man or woman or child of mark, of talent, a genius, that I don't rack my brains wondering what lies behind the veil. Of course a doctor's field is limited. He's apt to meet the maimed ones, off somewhere either in mind or body, abnormal for the time and not themselves. Otherwise they wouldn't seek him. Once a bird's wings are mended, its eyes bright, its poise and confidence restored—off it flies! As a matter of fact, the doctor sees the bird down, but he rarely sees it flying. Now with you, monsieur"—the Doctor turned courteously to include the Italian—"in your profession, I take it, it's just the other way."

Taglioni looked up quickly. All through the dinner, up to now, he had sat very silent, listening to the stories. A short man with a strange big head, the hair worn long like a musician's, thick and grizzled, the mouth finely molded,

the rest of the face rather coarse, battered as if from overmuch living—an impression that vanished as soon as he spoke. His response to Ménard's question was so spontaneous, his smile so childlike, so disarming, that his whole aspect changed, grew refined in a flash. A chevalier in manner, like most Italians, the spell of it affected us like a perfume in the room.

"Ah, the songbirds—*si*? You have interest in them, signor? You wish to hear their secrets?" He laughed out gaily. "It is true what you say. The public knows nothing; the reporters know nothing; the other artists—even they know nothing. Only the maid knows sometimes, if it is a good maid, a faithful maid; and the impresario occasionally when—if— Yes, I have heard things!"

Taglioni stretched out his hand to Barry's plate and took a strip of the mandarin peel, holding it up to his face, crushing it between his fingers.

"Permit me, signor. A very beautiful aroma, just as you said. It reminds one of so much—blue seas, bright skies, a terrace, a garden, flowers, moonlight—all that is subtle, seductive, sensuous. Have you ever heard of *Mademoiselle Mimi*?"

"A singer?" questioned Ménard.

"Yes, signor, a singer—a prima donna—one of the greatest on the stage today. She sings everywhere—Milan, Paris Covent Garden, the Metropolitan—a voice like a flute and a 'cello rolled into one. If you go to opera anywhere you must have heard her sing."

"*Mademoiselle Mimi*? No. Never heard the name."

Barry shook his head and frowned. The Doctor shrugged his shoulders.

"Strange," said Taglioni. "Whenever I touch a mandarin it makes me think of her; it makes me think of that night on Como, that night on the terrace when the moon was creeping up. She wasn't a prima donna then; she hadn't been discovered. Ever heard of Carmen, or *Tosca*, or *Zaza*?"

We all burst out laughing and stared at Taglioni.

"Well," he said, "she's been them all,

turn and turn about, those and hosts of others. But behind the footlights—this is a greenroom secret, gentlemen, so please don't divulge it—'*La Bohème*,' that was her first great part, the part that made her famous. Since then, among her friends, her intimates, those who know and love her best, she goes always by the pet name of '*Mademoiselle Mimi*.'"

"What's her real name?" asked Barry.

Taglioni looked around and put his fingers to his lips.

"An impresario has many an adventure, signor. In dealing with artists the nerves must be of steel, the tongue must be of velvet. Any moment things may happen—even at the last hour, with the box office sold out and the singers in their dressing rooms waiting for the call bell. It may be jealousy, it may be temper, a little misunderstanding—or it may be laryngitis. One never knows. Sometimes it is only the fire curtain that insists on descending just when it shouldn't. Sometimes the ballet dancers all go on a strike. Once a tenor went stark mad in the middle of an aria and transposed all his notes. We lured him off the stage with difficulty, telephoned a hurry call for his understudy and the opera went on. Once the Carmen cracked her voice—lost it right out of her throat, signor, at the last F sharp of the *Habenera*—all of a sudden went hoarse as a crow and flatted like a church bell! Yes, signor, an impresario, he must have the soft tongue, the quick eye, the steady heart. Otherwise he dies young."

Taglioni smoothed the mandarin peel caressingly, and tossed back a stray heavy lock of his hair. "*Diavolo*, signor—a curious fact but true! It was the crack in that soprano, extraordinary as it seems, that sent me to Como in May, to *Tremazzo*. And that's how and where—" He stopped and gave an odd laugh.

"In those days the strain was great and the pulse was not so steady. It was Saturday night that the Carmen went smash. I dropped my head in my hands like this, tore my hair, stamped my foot, rushed around, telegraphed, telephoned

—turned the world upside down. The season had been unlucky all along the line. One soprano in the hospital. Another—also in the doctor's hands. A third—same place! What was I to do? You can't give grand opera, you can't give opera comique, opera bouffe, opera anything with that sort of a cast! A crack in the upper register six notes across! *Per Dio!* And the theater full up for 'Traviata' Monday night!"

"Great Scott!" said Barry. "I should think you would die young! Worse than being a lawyer. Did you call in the tickets, sir, and close the house, or what?"

Taglioni lifted one shoulder and made a gesture with both hands, a rapid, negative, scorn expressing gesture.

"No," he cried, "of course not! There's never a labyrinth so winding that there isn't some way out. I took the first train to Como to interview Rambella. Better a setting star than no star at all. She was living there retired, in her villa near Tremezzo. A kind heart, past the years, but a voice still on the pitch. A little flattery, a little tact, a little coaxing—she'd do it. It was dusk when I arrived."

Taglioni looked down at the twisted peel in his hand, unfolded it gently and then curled it up again.

"Yes—a May evening, soft, balmy. The magnolias were in bloom; the terrace was in shadow; the moon was just rising above the mountains of Lecco. After the rush and din of Milan the stillness was enchanting, the scented air a sleeping potion to the overtaxed nerves. I lit a cigarette and strolled out along the lakeside. My meeting with Rambella was set for ten o'clock. Until then she was engaged with guests, and until then I was free. *Signori*"—Taglioni drew a long breath as if drawing in some fragrance—"you know our lakes in May? It is then one thanks God to be an Italian, to be alive in such a world!"

"It was just under the trees by the Villa Carlotta—there beyond the steps where the wall curves out. All of a sudden I stopped lazily, languidly, and leaned against the wall. The path was blocked. A small crowd of hotel guests

from the neighborhood, also lazy, also languid, were grouped about in a circle, mingling with the natives. From the center—it is always so on a moonlight night in Italy—came the glint of color, the sound of singing, the twanging of guitar strings.

"Any evening, in any village, all along the lakeside, from Lenno to Menaggio, you can hear the same thing. So then"—Taglioni laughed—"since I could not go on, since I would not go back, there was nothing else for it—to light another cigarette, lean against the wall, watch the splashing of the water, the gay-garbed troupe, and listen.

"There were five musicians in all. One played the mandolin; one played the guitar; two played violins, and the fifth castanets. Three were men and two were girls. From their dialect, their looks, the way they flashed their teeth and laughed, with that inborn, infectious, irresponsible abandon of the South, it was easy to see that the troupe was Neapolitan. One girl in particular caught my eye at once.

"She was the darkest of the lot. Hair and eyes black as sloes. A face, oval, olive-tinted, with the rich blood near the surface; brows straight, and eyelashes that curled up and tangled; the reddest lips you ever saw, and a form as graceful, as slender as a Psyche. Her skirt was dull blue, faded. Around her shoulders was a crimson scarf with tassels. In her hair was thrust a rose, and from her ears hung earrings. She was standing a little apart from the others, her dark head tipped sideways, shaking the castanets, clicking them in rhythm with the music.

"Apart from her beauty, apart from any grace of poise, there was something about that street girl, something inexplicable, indescribable, that arrested the attention of everybody there. The man with the guitar was in front singing, but no one noticed him. The other woman was pretty enough, bright-eyed, full of dash. No one gave her a glance. Now, signor"—Taglioni turned to Barry—"if you go much to the theater, if you know about the stage, there is one point that may or may not have proved an

enigma. It is to most laymen who take interest in the footlights. It is even to the impresarios. We recognize, we use the secret; but we never make any attempt at explanation. What is it that holds the public?

"It isn't beauty. A woman may be as handsome as a Juno and be a dead failure. It isn't voice or training. There are scores of good voices that never leave the chorus. It isn't acting alone—and it isn't mere talent. What is this subtle something, signor? How can you explain it?"

"Well, I don't know," said Barry thoughtfully. "The first time I saw Duse—it was before the rest of the world knew anything about her, before she'd been advertised, before she was anybody. One night I was passing a theater with a friend. A heavy storm had just come up, and we dropped inside for shelter. What the play was we didn't know. Who the actors were we didn't care. It was a traveling company, and we, too, were travelers, in there to keep dry, and for no other reason. It was pitch dark in the house when we entered, and the curtain was up. The first act had just begun.

"Already several of the company were on the stage talking. We yawned and glanced around us. The theater was large, black, empty. Besides ourselves there were not a dozen in the audience all told. By Jove, we looked at one another, laughed and glanced back at the stage.

"In the background of the scene, half in shadow, was a flight of steps. Crouched on the steps was a figure, a drab-colored cloak, a hood over the head, the face turned and hidden. The light was so dim, one had to strain to make it out at all; but once those steps were located, our gaze remained fixed. The figure never stirred. What there was I couldn't tell you. Everything was focused for the other side of the stage, but not one of those present even glanced there or listened. They watched that crouching figure, that shrouded, motionless, mysterious woman's figure—and we all but held our breath. It was like some hypnotic influence, a

force impossible to fathom, so intense, so subtle, so grasping and illusive. Not a soul could look away.

"When the figure rose from the steps at last—well, gentlemen, that was Duse! That was how she made her entrance! As the play went on, just as before, no one else existed; the rest were marionettes. She twisted our emotions all around her little finger. She held those twelve people in the hollow of her hand. At the end—a dozen throats, no more, a dozen pair of hands—yet they cheered her to the echo; they made the roof ring!

"The next night we went again; gave up our railroad tickets and stayed over for the purpose. The house was half full. The next—packed, jammed, not a seat for love or money. After that—you know the rest! A strange, a marvelous power, yes, sir," Barry nodded to Taglioni. "Those who have it are few; but when they do—" He laughed. "Is that how you stumbled on Mademoiselle Mimi?"

"Just so," exclaimed Taglioni, "just exactly so, signor! That night by the lakeside—she was nothing yet; she was nobody at all! The girl simply stood there, swaying to the music, flashing her lips and her eyes at the crowd, clicking with the castanets. The others did the playing and the singing and the work. The people watched her. Ha-ha-ha! This was the thought that came to my mind: 'If that little devil of a Neapolitan passes the plate, the copper, the silver will fall into it like rain! With a personality as vivid, as vibrant as hers, she will never go hungry. Her share of bread is more than earned if she never opens her mouth.' And then all of a sudden, even as I thought it, the instruments began to play again gaily, mockingly, a Neapolitan love song, and the girl sprang forward.

"That moment, signor"—Taglioni hesitated—"it was the one that counted for most in my whole career as impresario! I shall never forget it, and neither will she. The song was common enough. Just a simple air. A thousand times you must have heard it if you've ever been in Naples. But how she sang

it—*Dio mio!* No one, not even the Neapolitans themselves, have ever heard it sung like that!

"Her voice was pure as crystal, and every tone reflected back a dozen shades of feeling—your own, her own, the others—the moods of wandering, loneliness, ecstatic joy, abandon—moonlight, fragrance, the scent of oleanders, the splashing of the water! Just as the colors of the kaleidoscope mingle and fall and are never still an instant, so the emotions were shaken, thrilled, played on. And as she sang she danced. The dusk of her skin was soft like a rose leaf; her red lips parted; her dark eyes shone. One arm was curved above her head, clicking the castanets in rhythm to the music. Her feet tapped the pebbles; her slim body swayed. *Diavolo!*"

Taglioni was silent for a moment, twisting the mandarin peel absent-mindedly in and out between his fingers. "Yes, *signori*, that is how it was. The people went quite mad. They clapped and stamped and made as much noise as the Dal Verme packed on a popular night—and all for a street singer, if you please, a Neapolitan! She curtsied and laughed like a pleased child, and the instruments began again. I could hardly believe my ears, for all it is such a favorite always with the wandering singers—they began Carmen's love song. Yes, that very Habañera.

"The girl curved her arms again and clicked the castanets, half closing her eyes. You remember how it goes? Four bars *pizzicato* with the strings—and then the voice.

"She started in dreamily, seductively, *piano*, veiling the tones, breathing out the sound—the passion of the wild thing, half revealed, half restrained—the instinct for something beyond, it knows not what. With the repetition of the theme the voice grew fuller, less pathetic, more intense, vibrating, defiant. Where the key changes to the two sharps—you recall it?—all of a sudden the *tempo* quickened, the castanets clicked with more deviltry, abandon. Passion woke up and caught the senses in its leash. The voice soared, swelled. The instruments ran riot, *pizzicato*, *piz-*

zicato, right up to that last long F sharp and drop, that left us startled, breathless, staring a moment, still under the spell.

"That Habañera, *signori*, I had heard it all my life—all the Carmens, one after the other, at the Dal Verme, at the Scala—and there I stood speechless, taken off my feet as any country gawk at his first entrance to the gallery. Madonna, how they clapped, how they stamped, how they roared! The crowd had swelled by this time under the trees. The boat steps, the wall, the terrace, all were crowded. Of course, long before, I had made up my mind. But how to get hold of the girl to talk with her, that was the question—to penetrate beyond the throng! I glanced uneasily around. Was any other impresario by chance on the ground, or was I the first?

"Ah, in those days, *signori*, the pulses beat quickly just as I told you; the heart was eager. When I heard that Habañera I knew my name was made. Again I glanced around. The musicians were resting, chatting together, tuning up their instruments. In and out amongst the crowd—a shimmer of dull blue, a glitter of earrings, a rose peeping out of a dusky cloud of hair—the singer, with her red lips smiling, parted, was handing around the tambourine. The click of the coppers fell into it like hail. I stood with my hands in my pockets, listening, watching the movement and excitement of the crowd. The coppers rattled louder and the girl came nearer.

"When she was near enough, close behind my shoulder, I turned and confronted her sharply, face to face. She held up the tambourine, and her black eyes flashed to mine. *Diavolo, signori!* With all the laughter in them, there was something more behind it, a dignity, a poise, a pride of will and bearing. No prima donna could have equaled it at a thousand francs a night! I dropped my coppers humbly.

"May I speak with you?" I said.

"What about?" Her tone was haughty.

"About yourself."

"No."

"About your voice, signorina."

"She glanced at me over her shoulder and hesitated.

"Who are you, signor?"

"An impresario from Milan."

"Ah!" She hesitated again, half turned and regarded me steadily. "If it is about my voice, then—*la voce mia*—meet me at ten o'clock here by the wall. The crowd will have melted by that time. *Addio!*" and she vanished through the throng.

"That night"—Taglioni gave a laugh—"two engagements with *artisti* at the same hour, a prima donna and a street singer! A devil of a hole for a poor impresario! But the strangest part of it was—"

"What?" we all exclaimed.

"Wait," he cried, "wait until I tell you the story, just as she told it to me, word for word! If the world should get to hear it—if the public ever knew!"

"Well, ten o'clock struck. I had telephoned to Rambella meanwhile: 'Unavoidably detained. Will see you in the morning.' And there I stood in the shadow of the wall, waiting, impatient. The musicians were gone; the crowd had disappeared. The night was silent and still and fragrant. Across the water lay a white trail of moonlight. Would the girl come or not?"

"Just as I was taking my watch out of my pocket two figures came hastily, the only ones in sight, along the path from Cadenabbia. Skirting the boat steps they hurried straight toward me. The singer was ahead. She whispered to her companion, who stopped short where she was—and then the girl with the rose in her hair came forward alone, the little Neapolitan."

Taglioni laughed again. "Yes, *signori*," he said, "that was Mademoiselle Mimi. She began humbly enough, you must admit. And that night by the lakeside she signed her first contract. I had it all made out. A simple enough little sheet when you think what she is now."

"Read it through," I said, "here, by the light of the moon, and sign your name below."

"It was then the real truth came out.

"My name?" the girl repeated. She was stammering suddenly, and her face was like a sheet.

"Of course; your full name here."

"I handed her my fountain pen, and she turned her shoulder to me, bending down against the wall. She could not write, perhaps. I wondered. With these Neapolitan singers it is often that way. The girl stared down at the paper, shivering. It rustled between her fingers.

"No, no," she cried; 'it's not that'—divining my thought. 'Hush, signor; come nearer; I will tell you my secret. But first swear—'

"Then hurriedly, with flashing eyes, she told me who she was. You will never believe it, gentlemen, but the story is a fact. One of those strange mysteries that are disclosed sometimes from a past generation, seldom from our own. Sir, do you believe in international marriages?"

The question put to Barry was so curt, so unexpected, that the knife he was holding dropped from his fingers and he stared at the Italian blankly, in amazement.

"I?" he said. "Why, no—I don't. But what the deuce—"

Taglioni waved his hand.

"A pity," he said, "these beautiful American *signorine*—they do not think the same! So many tragedies and dramas would be avoided! The fortune weighs the scale in one end, the title in the other. A thousand pities, yes. For instance, the marriage of the Marchese della — a great name in Italy, gentlemen, too great to mention. He wasn't much except for that. He had a palace in Rome, and a half-ruined castle up in the Abruzzi; and his creditors stretched all the way from the Corso to the cemetery. It was because of them that he went to America. In fact he was obliged to; his family sent him. A friend of his had just gone out a few months before, and had come back successful. His errand was the same."

"Also successful?" demanded Barry drily.

"Quite so," said Taglioni. "Oh, eminently so! The bride was very pretty,

very charming, very—well, everything he could have asked."

"Of course," exclaimed Barry, "of course. Excuse me for interrupting your story, monsieur, but this subject of international marriage, since you ask me—by Jove, I could tell you things about it that would open your eyes! I've been looking into this very matter lately. Indeed, the fact is, that is what I'm here for now. My client—this of course is secret, gentlemen; it's a case just in point. An American girl, young, ambitious, romantic, knowing as much or little of the foreign world as a two-year-old baby—married six months to a French count, who is making ducks and drakes of her fortune. Ducks and drakes of her heart, too, for that matter! As soon as I can settle the divorce she's going back. What on earth makes them do it?"

Barry brought his fist with a crash down on the table. "Every year another victim, another knot tied! Miss Mary Ann Brown becomes the Principessa Anna Maria di Brunetti! Lohengrin, orange blossoms, white satin, wedding cake and silver tinsel—all the rest! Presto change! Very easy, very simple. A few dozen words from the clergyman, and it's finished! But when the knot is raveled, and you want to untie it—then we lawyers come in. To transpose the Principessa Anna Maria di Brunetti back to plain Mary Ann Brown again—you don't know; it's a devil of a job! The first time I ran across it—"

Taglioni took another strip of mandarin and balanced it thoughtfully across his little finger. "Yes?" he said. "Go on, signor."

"Why, it was back in my own native State"—Barry turned to the Doctor—"down in old Virginia. Our old Judge there—he was one of the finest types of men you ever saw, the type of Southern gentleman that is fast dying out—stern, chivalrous, cultured, a Galahad in honor, a very king on his own plantation. A thousand straight acres of tobacco fields growing, a small army of darkies to raise it, who both adored and feared him; and a homestead more beautiful than any English manor. He kept open house

there all the year round. Hospitality with both hands out, so to speak.

"His daughters were the belles of Virginia in their day. When they went up to Washington for the dances in the season, they were always known as the 'beautiful sisters.' Very dark, both of them, curly hair, great black eyes, cheeks and lips as red as health could paint them, and skin like tinted ivory. Petite, graceful, splendid horsewomen—dance half the night and be off at daybreak in the saddle—that sort of girls, full of life and vim and energy.

"The eldest—it was an awful blow to the old Judge when it happened. She was engaged, before her first season was halfway over, to a titled good-for-nothing—a Duca di something-or-other—I forget his name now. Well, the girl was very pretty, very determined, very much in love. American, she was used to carrying all before her. And she got her own way. She married in spite of opposition. The wedding was one of the events of society, an international affair. The groom was in uniform, sky blue and gold and all sorts of fandangoes—best man, and so forth, imported from Italy; and so the thing went off. The couple sailed away."

Barry looked over at Taglioni and hesitated. "You don't mind," he said, "if—"

The Italian shrugged his shoulders. "The fact's well known," he said, "over here. The Old World has no illusions in regard to its so-called aristocracy. It's only you Americans who persist in your idealism, who walk into it blindfold. What happened, signor?"

He spoke carelessly, still toying with the mandarin, arranging the peel in little strips around his plate.

"I don't know," said Barry. "No one ever knew. It was a queer business altogether. The wedding was at Easter. In June the bride returned. All the gay color was gone from her cheeks, all the youth from her bearing. She looked years older, wan-eyed, delicate, like a frail white anemone, nipped by the frost. She came back alone. The ostensible reason—and this was the queerest part of all—she came back to be pres-

ent at her younger sister's wedding. Another international marriage, if you please! An Italian marchese, and her husband's best man of three months before. But the Duca di something-or-other himself, whatever it was—his pale young Duchessa had to make excuses for him. He was 'ill—busy—detained by his estates—summoned for army maneuvers, and so on.'

"She said it with a smile, a straightening of the shoulders, a faint replica of the old gay spirit. Of course the world talked. The world wondered. What was the old Judge about to allow it? An other daughter, his youngest, his darling—with the consequences of the first mistake right before his eyes! But whatever happened there, the family was proud and they kept things to themselves. A strange wedding that!

"On the surface everything was festive, delightful; clear skies and a full surplined choir. Underneath—it was like a minor chord sustained, scarcely sounding—a hint of past battle, of coming storm and tragedy. As the wedding procession advanced toward the altar, I shall never forget that strange, tense impression. The old Judge, grim, dark-browed, silent—the bride on his arm, young, radiant, gazing happy-hearted, whole-souled straight ahead of her. No doubt or fear there! Beyond, the Marchese, his face averted, smiling. All about, the throng of guests. In every mind a question.

"The answer to that question, gentlemen? Well, it leaked out years afterward, somehow, somewhere, accidentally, as most secrets do, sooner or later. A servant, a relation, somebody whispered. A whisper overheard, repeated, enlarged on. The scene in that family just before the wedding, they said, had been beyond words.

"On the one side the old Judge, who was dead set against it, and had a will of iron; with him the Duchessa, who had come back for no other purpose, who on her knees warned and pleaded with her sister; even the old aunt, who had mothered the girls since their babyhood, who had spoiled, adored given in to them always. The three stood solid. And

against that phalanx, a mere slip of a girl scarcely out of her teens, a gay, self-willed child, whose path in life so far had been hedged about with roses—who, having seen only roses and never felt a thorn, dreamed from past experience of more roses just ahead. All they did, all they said—it was like trying to reason with a swallow that had never flown before. The sky was blue; the air was sweet; the wings were strong and fluttering. All the world before it, and the cat below was hidden.

"One after the other, first the aunt, then the Duchessa, they gave up in despair. At last only the old Judge was left, still determined, inexorable. The sharpest weapon in his hand, the only one in such a case, lay shattered, useless in his grasp. The girl had inherited her fortune from her mother. She was of age—and this was the strangest part of all—whether influenced by the Marchese, or maddened by the long fight and the aspersions cast against him, the loyalty of the girl was aroused—who can tell? But this is a fact, and I know it from her lawyers: the day before the wedding she made her entire fortune over, every stock, every bond, every investment, every dollar, to the man whom she trusted and loved—to her husband.

"It was then the storm broke. The Judge, they said, was white with passion, petrified with horror. When he learned, it was too late. The papers were made out, ready, waiting to be signed in his daughter's hand.

"If you do," he said—"if you do, remember this: from the moment that you leave my house, from the moment that the clock strikes tomorrow at noon, you will have to bear the consequences whatever they are—*whatever they are!* Do you understand? One daughter has come home to me, crushed and broken, her heart's blood drained by these accursed foreigners! In her case there was some excuse; in spite of my misgivings, she went into it ignorant, innocent, unwarned. In your case there is none. This man is a friend of the other, here for the same purpose—not for you, but for what you can give him. As much a beggar and more than the

tramp who comes whining to the back kitchen door.

"To go through this thing a second time—the strain, the shock, the humiliation—it would kill your aunt, it would kill your sister; and I tell you frankly for myself I couldn't bear it. You will have to choose now, today, this moment. Either tear those papers up, send the beggar about his business—or go ahead, face the consequences, and keep quiet about it! Will you sign or not?"

"The girl took the papers over to the desk without a word, dipped the pen in the ink and wrote her name across them, one after the other. A hand firm and round and clear, without a trace of trembling.

"That was all," said Barry. "The wedding went off just as I told you. She kissed her family good-bye. And the last they saw of her, she was leaning forward in the carriage beside the Marchese, waving her hand, smiling, radiant, while the rice showered in on them from all sides like snowflakes. And then the carriage vanished."

"Well?" said Taglioni.

"Well," said Barry, "curiously enough—you'll be surprised, I dare say—but it turned out all right—at least, so far as anyone ever heard to the contrary. She used to write home regularly once a month or so. I think she does still. But the old Judge, the aunt, the Duchessa—they never came abroad. In fact, after that they seldom left Virginia. And the Marchesa never returned. She lived in Italy with her husband. As the years went by—you know how such things are. Her friends at home lost track of her shortly after her marriage. They said she was exclusive, proud of her title, cared only for the nobility, was weaned entirely away from America. Whether that was true or not, at any rate her letters to the family were gay, affectionate, rosy-hued always.

"Oh, yes, it turned out well. For once the Judge—a keen old chap he was, too, for reading character—this once he proved wrong. The last news I had was several years ago. The family were still down on the plantation in Virginia, and the Marchesa was living in one of

her castles, somewhere in Italy—living rather retired because of ill health, but always very happy, and contented with her husband.

"Yes," said Barry, calculating, "so far as my experience goes, that's the one international marriage that was lucky, the only one that I can think of where it did turn out all right. But—I beg your pardon, sir!"

He looked up suddenly, and met Taglioni's eye. "I didn't mean to interrupt you, monsieur. You were saying—"

"Oh, nothing," said Taglioni—"nothing. You mean about the singer?"

"Why, the little Neapolitan," we all exclaimed, "Mademoiselle Mimi! Who was she really, your great prima donna? You were just about to tell us.

The Italian shrugged his shoulders.

"Oh, nobody," he said, "nobody in particular. Just a girl who had married a man high up in the world as to name, and nowhere at all as to achievements and character. A mistake like hosts of others. And she found him out, that's all. When she did—this is really the odd part about it, *signori*, and what set the girl, for me, apart from other women—she was too proud to go on living with a man of that kind; she was too proud also to let the world suspect. Besides, there were reasons.

"So one day they had a frank talk. And the next—in all the papers in Rome it was stated that So-and-so, for reasons of health, had retired to her castle up in the Abruzzi. There she has been ever since, and there she is today. Anyone in Rome will tell you. The husband—well, he hunts, yachts or loafs about the Corso, drinks vermouth at Aragno's, drives a brake up on the Pincio. I've seen him many a time. He does it all on his wife's money.

"What!" cried Barry. "You mean to say—"

"*Pisch!*" Taglioni waved his hand "That castle in the Abruzzi is as empty as your hand. A half-ruined, deserted tomb of a place, where the bats fly in and out. But it saved the situation. As an alibi, the wife is there. In reality she vanished, leaving her good name and her worldly goods behind her. That was

the bargain. She vanished completely, body, soul and spirit, off the earth, and has never been seen from that day to this. What became of her, signor—if you ask me that question?"

Taglioni gazed down at his plate, at the little strips of mandarin peel, and shifted them together absently, carelessly, as if his mind were far away.

"*Diol!* Luckily she had pluck, a grand talent and a Neapolitan maid—a devoted, faithful soul, who taught her the dialect, showed her how to act the part, and stuck to her through thick and thin. That is how it happened. She told me the story herself, there by the wall, that soft evening in the moonlight, and then she signed her married name. But first she made me swear—" Taglioni nodded slowly.

"There's no better disguise than grand opera," he said. "She has kept it all these years, in Italy, in France, in England, in America. Not a soul has ever dreamed."

Barry put his hand to his forehead suddenly, as if a thought had struck him. "No, no!" he cried. "She isn't, couldn't be—impossible! The maiden name, the nationality, monsieur—did she tell you really?"

The impresario hesitated; then he glanced around the table.

"*Chi lo sa?* Perhaps she did; perhaps she didn't. My memory for such things

is very poor, signor. And besides, what does it matter? I was in a church once in Rome—a high pontifical mass—and the young bishop who officiated, he was darker even than most Italians; and he wore the triple hat in gold, the purple robes, the lace cotta, buckled shoes, all the fixings—surrounded by acolytes, priests, candles. The occasion was some special one, and the nave was filled with tourists. An American girl was standing by my elbow.

"What a Roman scene!" she said.

"And that bishop—how Italian!"

"As a matter of fact"—Taglioni laughed—"the tourists couldn't know, of course, and the effect was just the same; but that bishop—he had just arrived, an American from Washington! You can't always tell, you see; but as I said, it doesn't matter.

"Yes, it's a strange thing, *signori*, the strangest thing about these mandarins. Every time I see them they take me back to Como, to that night, that Habafiera, the twang of the guitar strings, the moonlight on the water—my little Neapolitan, with her red lips, her black eyes, her castanets clicking, her form like a Psyche! Alias—the Marchesa! Alias—one of the greatest lyric prima donnas on the Italian stage today! Alias—"

Taglioni's eyes and Barry's met.

"Alias—" he said slowly, "Mademoiselle Mimi!"



"HE has discovered a new species of fruit."

"What is it?"

"He says it is found on roof gardens. It looks like a peach but is really a lemon."



"ARE you sure he is a good doctor?"

"Well, he is recommended by the president of the insurance company that has a fifty-thousand-dollar policy on my life."

KILGANNON OF THE SWORD

By Seumas MacManus

SAID Dr. Ned Kilgannon then, as he pushed from him the decanter and shoved back his chair and stretched him more at ease and puffed at his pipe: "That was me—that self-same Knight of the Three Red Feathers. At least it was supposed to be me. What? You'd like to know how it came about? Ha, ha ha, ha! Then you'll hear—without reservation, gentlemen—the narrative of 'The Knight of the Three Red Feathers,' or how that the name of 'Kilgannon of the Sword' was written into, and blotted out of, the history of Ireland."

It was in the years when the century was young that Ned Kilgannon, more by good luck, maybe, than good merits, won his doctor's degree, and was pushed about from post to pillar, striving to make, by fair means or foul, as much as would keep life and soul together, as *locum tenens*. Many a dodge, in faith, I tried, and among others I was fated to sail as the ship's doctor in a cruising vessel that went out to the Malaysian Archipelago. Half bent upon scientific research of some kind or other at the expense of an easily fooled government, and wholly bent upon sport; but they got more sport than they counted on, for they had three encounters, no less, with pirates, and the third and last, which convinced them that they had got enough sport for one cruise and sent them home again, was the most exciting by far, inasmuch as it was for a time on the tosser whether the whole ship's company would choose to journey into the next world by way of water or of the steel road that the pirates were so anxious to provide. And it was in

this encounter that I made myself famous. Just by virtue of knowin' the point of a sword from the hilt—and bein' able to make the point good—I managed to save the life of my friend, Jack MacIntyre, who was one of the investigation commission that we carried—the one, too, who had stuck me in for the job on the ship, the best-natured, biggest-hearted, most worthless devil of a fellow that ever tramped the pavements of Dublin.

No matter; I saved Jack, anyhow, from goin' to heaven that time, and I sent a devil of a Malay there instead to keep a seat warm for him. And I made myself famous—or, to be correct, Jack made me so.

For, since we returned home and got to our own native Dublin, where there was no one could traverse Jack's mis-statements, he told the terriblest sheer falsehoods that any person who ever knew Jack could conceive about the marvelous wonders I wrought with the sword in that pirate fight. Whereas I had simply given one well placed prod of the implement, which I hardly knew how to hold. Jack, as it was the only form in which he felt he could give expression to his gratitude, swore that I mowed a lane, from bow to stern, through a forest of pirates that crowded the deck as thick as they could stand, and at the farther end of the lane killed thirteen men who had set upon him, and who would surely have overcome him had I not walked in on the scene over the bodies of the dead men that strewed my path.

Faith, myself could well have spared Jack's wonderful story concerning me. He made me mighty uneasy every time

he begun telling it—which was every time that he ever got me in company. I couldn't have the heart or couldn't muster enough courage to make a liar of Jack, considering that the poor fellow thought that he was doin' me the best turn in the world; so I sat and blushed every new time he told it in every new company, and if anything was wanted to confirm the truth of Jack's tale, my blushing did it, and the enthusiastic creatures said, when they saw me blushing violently while I tugged surreptitiously at Jack's tail to make him hold his tongue—said: "There's a hero for you now! The most modest that ever was invented. Do you see how confused he is at hearin' of his own feats?" And when they detected me tuggin' Jack and pinching him or kicking him on the shins or diggin' him in the ribs, by way of beggin' him for the Lord's sake to hold his tongue, their enthusiasm redoubled. "Why," says they, "he's actually mad with poor Jack MacIntyre for lettin' the cat out of the bag, and giving the world to know his skill with the sword and his valor in fight!" And then I was cornered and nonplused entirely. To kill me outright, "Kilgannon of the Sword" Jack named me; and the name stuck—so that I was ashamed of my life almost to go into company at all, at all. And for protestin' against it, I tried that, and the only effect it had was to convince outright anyone who had had any doubts whatsoever about my greatness and my heroism. "He's surely a real out and out hero, when he takes to telling barefaced lies like that against himself," they said. And "Kilgannon of the Sword" was the lion of the hour in every society circle in Dublin.

Ned Kilgannon's path then was not all thorns, notwithstanding. I tell ye, lads, there was many a girl—and many a winsome and a wealthy one, more by the same token—fell head over heels in love with him on the strength of his fictitious reputation. And whenever I remonstrated now with Jack MacIntyre, he told me I was the most ungrateful creature ever was christened, seeing

that from his recommendation of me all the heiresses in Ireland's capital were literally throwing themselves at my head. "Kilgannon," he said, "Jack MacIntyre, who was always a good-for-nothing devil so far as himself was concerned, has done you the best turn of your lifetime, unless you're too deuced a fool to see and take advantage of it. He has brought youth, beauty, wealth and rank, to your feet; you can pick and choose and live happy ever after. Are you goin' to let the opportunity of a lifetime slip while you chop logic with me regarding the abstract merits of truth with a capital T? If you do you're a fool, with every letter of it a capital. There's Gwendoline MacArdle," says he, "your latest victim—and your winsomest and wealthiest. Marry Gwendoline, and when you want a permanent hand for counting your gold every mornin', don't forget poor devil Jack MacIntyre."

True enough, Gwendoline was a victim, and it soon began to strike me, a welcome one, too. She was a beautiful girl without question; that her father, Sir Joseph, who had made his fortune in porter, was as rich as Dives, was no fault of hers—and no detraction whatsoever from the girl's attractiveness. I had just met and been introduced to her at the Lord Mayor's ball, barely a week before, yet already we were as thick as thieves. She was a girl of a mighty romantic turn of mind, her head filled with knights and gay cavaliers, their tournaments and their sword feats and, a shame to say it, it was Jack's brazen falsehoods about myself that won her heart—God bless it—to me. I personified, she said, what she had just begun to fear existed only in the imagination of idealists. Of course, at the outset, I tried again the denial of Jack's falsehoods, and of course, as usual, this made Gwen—I came to call her Gwen by and by—completely rapturous; so I had to hold my tongue and let her go her headlong course. Moreover, I began to see with Jack, that it was very like a direct tempting of Providence if I would persist in turning away such a grand chance—youth, wealth and

beauty all rolled into one. And after mature deliberation I resolved to put myself into the hands of Providence, and accept with resignation whatever should befall.

And in pursuance of this policy I begun makin' myself as agreeable as I could to Gwen. I managed to meet her at the same parties, balls and routs, to dance with her, at least often enough to form subject for remark, to see her home from various places pretty frequently, to talk romance to her often—at length, such is the depravity of human nature, to boast to her of the marvelous feats that had won me the proud title of "Kilgannon of the Sword."

"Kilgannon of the Sword!" She just loved to hear people talk of me so, and began to take as much personal pride in my renown as I myself used to take shame in it. My occasional prickings of conscience, though they served to show me that I was still not outside the pale of redemption, could not yet drive me to do what, manfully, I should have done. That my dear Gwen was head over heels in love with me was a fact beyond question, but it was equally unquestionable that it was not plain Ned Kilgannon, but the renowned "Kilgannon of the Sword" who had won her sweet young heart. I could not, for the life of me, be so cruel as to disillusion her and break her fragile little heart. Moreover—and this was not without due weight—she was a daughter of Sir Joseph MacArdle, the Porter Knight, who was wealthy enough to bestow on his one child her weight in gold three times over. The Fates, it was plain, conspired with Jack MacIntyre to compel me to bear my unearned spurs as meekly as I could. And Ned Kilgannon philosophically bowed to the inevitable.

Well and good. All was going, and likely to go, merrily as a bunch of marriage bells, when, what do you think, but doesn't the devil—for it couldn't be anyone else—along with some silly romances, put it into Gwen's head that it would be a grand and glorious idea to call up the days of

chivalry again, by havin' a grand knightly tournament in Phoenix Park, one that would stir to its depths Dublin society, from her friend the Viceroy down to Mrs. Mulcahy, the baker's wife; and incidentally admit of an opportunity for her beloved "Kilgannon of the Sword" to dazzle Dublin by the feats for which he was far famed!

My first impulse was to run amuck, like O'Malley, and stick Jack MacIntyre for a start. I put a Christian-like restraint upon my passions, though, and stopped to remonstrate with Gwen, tried to impress on her that, after all, these tournaments had gone out, as they should, with all the other relics of barbarity. I only shocked her, however, and made her doubly determined to have it. She was a leader of fashion, and what she proposed would be taken up with enthusiasm by a thousand of the fashionables who tramped ever on her heels; and when she had given out the word that the days of chivalry must be revived, and take place in Phoenix Park, the whole world, it seemed to me, clapped its hands and shouted and yelled for the tournament.

"But I know, Ned," she said—for I should mention that she had long since got to the stage of callin' me Ned—"that it is your wonderful modesty that made you at first try to deny your own marvelous skill and bravery, and to disown the richly earned title of 'Kilgannon of the Sword.' But Ned," she said, "virtue ever had and ever will have its reward; and the crowning reward of your signal virtue you are going to win at the great tournament, which, specially for your dear sake, I am devising."

Oh, black botheration upon you, Gwendoline MacArdle, and your virtue's reward! And the black curse of the crows upon the scoundrel Jack MacIntyre! The heart inside of me was in a white rage with everybody and everything, for I saw, all of a sudden, how the whole world was conspiring to ruin the reputation of one who from his childhood's day never did a thing to earn its ill will. I hoped against hope that, if my protestations didn't do it,

there was enough good sense left in Dublin society to laugh Gwen out of the tomfool idea. But instead, to my consternation and mortification, they proved themselves one fool greater than another, and broke, every one of them, their necks tumblin' over one another in their race to be the first to help it on. When at length the grand tomfoolery itself was finally fixed to take place on a certain day, a fortnight ahead, and the Lord Lieutenant and his wife, who had consented to preside and to judge, and every noted swordsman in Ireland—and in those days these were neither poor nor few nor far between—had, like the blatherskites they were, joyfully consented to make themselves a laughing stock for the Dublin mob; and all the world had begun to talk nothin' else but the big day that was in store for them, and particularly of the feats to be done that day by the famous "Kilgannon of the Sword," I concluded that it was high time to change my lodgings.

So with little more delay I struck down the quays, as best I could make my way through a great hippodrome party, with all its animals and appurtenances, that was just being disembarked, and engaged with a captain friend of mine to sail with him on an expedition that he was fitting out, and that was intended to start in ten days' time for Tierra del Fuego. He was mighty glad to have me, indeed, and I blessed my stars for my good luck, and went home and slept a sweet, peaceful sleep for the first time since this confounded circus that Gwen had conceived rode like a nightmare over me. Refreshing sleep was such a novelty to me then that I do believe I wouldn't have wakened till the day after the morrow, if it hadn't been for Jack MacIntyre—if I had time I'd like to stop and curse the scoundrel again—choking me awake. When I rubbed my eyes and got my senses I found the fellow sitting on the side of my bed, telling me it was twelve o'clock in the day and that he'd news for me would delight my soul. I rapped out of me, I'm afraid, something that was more

fervent and forceful than virtuous, when I saw the vision of him—for he had taken good care to hide himself out of my way for a week past; in fact, the only redeeming feature in the rascal's character in those days was that he had enough good sense to be mortally ashamed of himself for the plight he had landed me in.

Well, as I said, I gave Jack, anyhow, a greeting that was more curt than courteous, and he took it like a Christian, turning the other cheek, for he felt thoroughly humiliated—and no wonder; and said he:

"Ned, old man, forgive me. Sure I meant it all for the best. And now," says he, "I've made a grand discovery that will fetch you out with flyin' colors, and leave your name and your title forevermore unquestioned and unquestionable."

"Is this more of it?" says I, and I reached my hand under my bed to get hold of my boot to brain him.

"Hold on, you—hold on!" says Jack, says he, gettin' a grip of me by the arm and shaking the boot again out of my fist. "Hold on yet till I explain. If you don't go on your knees then and thank Providence that made Jack MacIntyre your friend, you can call me everything but a gentleman, that's all."

"Get out of my sight this instant," says I, "or I'll whitewash the walls of my room with your brains—if you have the like. I have engaged," says I, "to start with Captain Molony for Tierra del Fuego Thursday week next, for the pure purpose of puttin' half the earth between myself and such a scoundrel as you."

"Aisy—be aisy" says Jack, says he, "and don't do anything so mad in such a hurry. Is it throw up, without an effort, Gwendoline MacArdle, the most beautiful and best girl in Dublin, not to mention the wealthiest, you'd do, like a madcap?"

"But a madcap is somethin' to be coveted," says I, "as compared with being shown up as an idiot and a brag-gart impostor."

"But neither the one nor the other,"

says Jack, says he, "if you'll only have the gumption to close your mouth and open your ears and listen to the joyful news I have for you."

And he went on to tell me that late last night he had fortunately discovered there was in the hippodrome, which had just landed at the quays, from Glasgow, a most remarkable swordsman; his chief business was to do sword tricks, but even outside the tricks, he was unsurpassed in the three kingdoms in the use of the weapon. "By a special dispensation of Providence," says Jack, says he, "the fellow is just the same height as yourself, and when he is in his full armor, as all the knights of the tournament will be on the big day in the Park, it will be a mighty easy thing to pass him off as 'Kilgannon of the Sword'—all the easier when he demonstrates to the world, as he will that day, his prowess with the weapon."

Myself jumped with joy. Says I: "Have you seen him?"

"Seen him," says Jack, says he, "and engaged him, and sworn him to secrecy, to fight and win your laurels for you that day, for the beggarly consideration of fifty guineas, half down and the other half to be paid after he has won out."

"Cheap at the money," says I.

"It is," says he, "when you consider it saves to you Gwen MacArdle, her beauty and her wealth."

"And my reputation likewise," says I.

"And your reputation, of course," says Jack, says he.

"Give us your fist," says I; "you're a prince among men, MacIntyre—one of the Lord's own creatures. May God bless you and preserve you to me as a friend always!" And I wrung Jack's hand till his arm ached.

"Thank ye—thank ye!" says Jack, says he, and the tears almost stood in the poor fellow's eyes with joy at being able to serve me and make me happy again. And, true enough, from being the most miserable wretch, I had become, in half an hour's time, the happiest man upon earth—bar no one.

Well, boys, to make a long story short,

Jack and I laid our plans well. We coached the hippodrome chap and had him in all readiness. The knights to take part in the tournament were to be all mysterious, of course, followin' the rules that Gwen found laid down in her tale books, but everyone was to have a distinguishing mark of his own and be known by some romantic or mysterious or other humbuggery title. It was open to the winning knight, after he had selected and made queen of the tournament his choice among the beauties present, to disclose his identity or not, as he chose. Gwen asked me if I would impart in loving confidence to her the secret by which she was to know me in the lists, and I had little hesitation in telling her that I would wear in my helmet three tall red feathers, and be known as the "Knight of the Three Red Feathers."

"And of my Knight of the Three Red Feathers tomorrow I shall surely be proud," says Gwen. At this I blushed with all my ability, and assured her in becomingly modest manner that "Kilgannon of the Sword" should, anyhow, do his humble best to bring to her dear heart pleasure and to her fair brow honor.

She kissed me, boys—I blushingly confess to it—she kissed me, Gwen did.

I'll admit that it was not altogether without fear that I, in partial disguise, took my seat next day on a part of the overcrowded benches, where I could get a good view of Gwen. There was a tremendous gathering, not merely of fashionable Dublin, but all fashionable Ireland, there that day; and all the beauty of Ireland's capital and of Ireland's provinces that assembled and took its seats on the benches was the sight of a lifetime. I suppose such a dazzling array had never been got together in Ireland, or out of it, since Eve was in short frocks. There was magnificent display of sword exercise shown on the ground by all the various knights, but, to the delight of my heart, and the evident rapture of everybody, and the joy of Gwendoline, one particular knight, with three red feathers in his helmet, overcame all who went

against him in the most brilliant manner imaginable. I must say that Jack MacIntyre, whose duty it was that day to move around and whisper confidentially here and there: "The Knight of the Three Red Feathers is none other than our old friend 'Kilgannon of the Sword'"—I must say, I say, that Jack did his duty admirably, for before the battles were half through, I, who kept my ears open, could hear everybody whispering to everybody else: "Do you notice the splendid fellow with the three red feathers in his helmet, who is doing all the splendid work? He is 'Kilgannon of the Sword,' the Lord bless him!" And the reply would usually be: "Small need to tell us that. Who else than Kilgannon could manipulate the sword in such gallant style?"

Boys, it was the proudest day of my life—for so far I mean, for so far.

Gwen, I could see, had her eyes fairly riveted on the Knight of the Three Red Feathers, and she was following every move of him as if her very life depended on it; and at every new feat he did, and every new champion he overcame, her face lit up, and she clapped her little hands till they must have sorely ached. In the field she divided attention with the Knight of the Three Red Feathers himself, for everyone was now pointing her out as the certain Queen of the Tournament—and she knew this, and her heart, it was plain to be seen, was bursting with joy and pride. "Kilgannon of the Sword" was the hero of the hour, and to all appearances likely to be established, once for all, as the hero of the age. And "Kilgannon of the Sword" was, as you may well suspect, duly elated to the heaven above the seventh—and feeling as much at home there as if he had been born and bred in it—until, boys, a fearful thing happened.

The Knight of the Three Red Feathers, who had by his wonderful ability and skill been laying all comers in the dust till almost it got monotonous, had nearly reached the end of the challenges, his crown of glory all the time gathering, like the rolling snow-

ball, when, as the devil would have it, he, making another marvelous thrust at his latest adversary, slipped his horse and came down, at the complete mercy—at least as everyone breathlessly thought—of his opponent; and everyone's heart went down into his boots with a thud. But lo and behold ye, he hadn't well touched ground, although it was on the broad of his back he came, till, by some wonderful kind of a spring and a twist, people saw him rise into the air and light on his horse's back, in time just to smite hip and thigh his opponent, who was still reaching for him in the place where he was not, on the ground—smite him, and leave him sprawling on the selfsame spot where himself had been just a fraction of a second before. The thunder of shouting and clapping in which the thousands found relief for their feelings was terrific to hear, and for the first time during all of the battles the Knight of the Three Red Feathers seemed vain of himself, and got, one would think, a bit jaunty. But, however this might be, there was no mistaking it now, that Gwen—if I had any shades of doubt in my mind before, was mine now, heart and soul, fate and fortune.

There was only one other bout, too, and the great day's tournament would be ended, with the Knight of the Three Red Feathers victor all through, and Gwendoline MacArdle Queen of the Tournament.

But lo and behold ye, when the next and last knight came in, the Knight of the Three Red Feathers, having found, as he thought, the weak point of his public, went against him, to the dumfounding of everyone and the blazing indignation of my outraged self, standing upon one leg in the saddle! Lightly and quickly, indeed, he overthrew this, his last adversary; and, by way of what I might call peroration, tumbled a deft summersault on the animal's back, coming down in the saddle seat with face toward the animal's tail, and spurring his horse off thus round the field like fury, before the amazed gathering—an amazed gathering that

was very quickly turned into one of the most hilariously amused gatherings that it ever was my dread pain to hear. My power either to move or speak seemed to desert me, but I could not help observing, however, that they were clearing a space around Gwendoline MacArdle, to give the creature air. The ruffian in the ring crowned his unspeakable villany by now balancing his sword upon his nose, while he tore faster and faster in his *vice-versa* position, to the accompaniment of thundering screeches of laughter, that, it was evident, made the scoundrel's heart swell with pleasure and pride. Poor Gwen now wanted no more air, for she was fainted complete.

And as they were carrying her from the field in one direction, I was tearing like the furies away from it in another, and halt or pause I didn't till I reached my lodgings, and—as good luck would have it, I had met Captain Molony only that morning and learned from him that he had been delayed setting sail, and was getting under weigh that very night—began throwing into my trunk everything I could lay my hands on.

An hour after, just as I had everything packed up and ready, and my brain I thought was bursting outright, the scoundrel came dashing into my room, the picture of agony. I would have murdered the fellow without any manner of doubt and without any compunction of conscience whatsoever, if it hadn't been that, ere I had time to do it, in on the heels of him comes tearin' the hippodrome scoundrel, looking for—what do you think, boys?—looking for thanks, gratitude and his twenty-five guineas! As if Providence would save me from having the blood of two such miserable wretches on my hands, the both of them fell to murdering one another. I left them fighting like two demons when I cleared the house and struck a beeline for my ship—and for Tierra del Fuego—three years of which alone sufficed to wipe out the memory of the bitter and fearful experience which marked the miserable ending of the meteoric career of "Kilgannon of the Sword."

McCarthy, will you please pass that drop of consolation in the decanter at your elbow? Ned Kilgannon needs it.



IMMORTAL

By Pierre Vivante

SPAKE Youth: "Life is before me spread alluring;
I will forth in the world to fight and conquer."
His companion was Love, and Joy his fellow,
His days filled with the pledge of spring eternal,
His eye bright as the summer's sky at nooning,
His lips singing a song as sweet as summer's.
Came Death, icy of finger, breathing winter,
Touched Youth's eyes, and behold, they closed forever,
Kissed Youth's lips, and behold their song was silent.
But Love, rising on wings, as dawn is lifted
From the sea in the month of bloom of roses,
Flew straightway to a Heart who gave him welcome.

STARS

By Stuart B. Stone

STARS are luminous nebulosities of extra-planetary space, or the eyes of night and the punctuation of the firmament, according to whether a Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society or a minor poet is at the butt end of the telescope.

Stars are of many kinds: evening, morning, fixed, shooting, lode, lone, theatrical, fistic and diamond. Among the famous stars mentioned in history are the Star in the East and the Star of Empire. The Star in the East was discovered by three wise men, who sat up on Christmas Eve some nineteen hundred years ago looking for it. Their descendants have perpetuated the habit of making a night of it on the twenty-fourth of December, but have contributed little to the lore of astronomy. The Star of Empire is a westward-bound sphere, which, having started from Asia on a tour around the world some centuries ago, has about completed the circuit.

Stars have infinite uses. Set behind the footlights, they obscure and eclipse the soubrette and minor satellites. Tacked upon the American flag, they indicate that a new Western commonwealth is endeavoring to stuff the world and the whole solar system into its constitution. Placed upon the breast of a Hibernian, they confer authority to make the world move on. In modern poetical and fictional literature they serve the purpose of eyes for the ravishing heroines. Polar explorers use them for signposts in lands of purple ice and half-insanity. Father Abraham once employed them in a series of calculations designed to enumerate his offspring.

Stars may be seen to best advantage after striking the head violently against a lamppost or other soft substance.

Stars are weighed within a fraction of an ounce by scientists, without the slightest interruption to revolutions, orbit flying, twinkling, waxing, waning or aphelion and perihelion activities. This is not done with an ordinary pair of scales, but is accomplished by means of a lead pencil, a triangle, a copper cylinder, a Higher Course in Calculus and a little headwork such as is commonly employed by the minions of the Sugar Trust.

Stars are named for heathen gods and goddesses of doubtful reputation. As a Carnegie Institute professor has discovered some sixty thousand new ones, it is probable that science will be compelled to borrow General Arthur, Henry George, Salmon P. Chase and Edgar Allan Poe from the cigar manufacturers.

If we refrain from rebating, bribing, jackpotting, nature faking, Polar faking and the use of benzoate of soda, we are promised a crown of stars for eternity.

Let us hitch our destinies to a star.



POST—Thinks he's the whole thing, does he?

PARKER—Well, I'd hardly go as far as that, but he certainly considers himself a quorum.

THE ALLURING OF J. WEDGEWOOD WARE

By Ellen McDougall

EVELYN STIMSON was wholesome, if you know what I mean by that. Everyone at the Lowell said "if you know what I mean by that." It implied ignorance in the listener and subtlety in the speaker. It was, in fact, the characteristic pose of this hardened, worldworn assemblage of men and women in New York Bohemia.

Miss Stimson had come directly from Kansas City, Kansas; though, as far as the fact that her home city lay in Kansas was concerned, it might as well have been Missouri, as no place fifteen minutes outside of New York City was ever discussed. The dull rich who thronged Fifth Avenue were openly ridiculed, and any enthusiasm over the Bowery and the Ghetto were only marks of provincialism. In fact, "flat washes," Chinese white and "a certain bit of style" were the only topics which were welcomed. Everyone scoffed at everyone else. The only time they really united was against the common herd, who were fondly called climbers and accused of having a keen eye for "celebs."

It was a long way for a girl to come, "if you know what I mean by that." Already you are beginning to see the appropriateness of the phrase. No doubt you yourself will be using it, for it has a certain familiar, yet subtle intimate touch after all, in spite of its snob-bishness.

Night after night Evelyn sat in the dining-room and heard the stories of the men and women, who at first glance seemed quite as usual as those of Kansas City, Kansas. Perhaps it was the fact

that she had come such a long way that made her table companions generous in detail when giving the history of the "Who's Who" contingent.

The most interesting to Evelyn was J. Wedgewood Ware—the Don Juan of the house. His chief interest in life was subduing sirens. He not only subdued them, but threw them aside after a careful analysis of their shortcomings and small sins, but in so clever a way as to leave them still admiring him and cat-tishly jealous.

J. Wedgewood Ware had class. Miss Thompson thought it was the way his coat collar fitted, and Miss Brown attributed it to the way he carried his shoulders. Nevertheless he had it—that strange, indefinable thing—class. More than that, he had all the characteristics of a fox terrier. If you have ever seen one, enveloped in a cloud of dust as it chases a grocery wagon, you will know what I mean. The minute the horses stop the dog loses all interest and wanders away after the first boy on a bicycle. And so J. Wedgewood Ware.

He was kind, though brief. If he called on one girl and another came in he could assure each, ably assisted by her natural vanity, that she was the preferred one. After a spasmodic affection of a month or two for a girl, he dropped her without any warning. When her curiosity conquered her vanity she called him up and asked him if he were not coming to see her any more. And the answer always was: "There's a reason." He always said it in a sad, plaintive voice, and the girl generously

supplied a flattering one. That is the way he still kept them dangling after the affair proper was dead. The girls who had not loved him regarded him as a cynic, and there was always a victim ready for the sacrifice. No matter how much she may have seen of another experience, a woman always thinks she can do better.

Evelyn bowed timidly, day after day, in a rather far-off manner to J. Wedgewood, realizing her own lack of ability to attract this man of the world. He would probably have gone quietly out of her life if it had not been for Miss Jordan, who had advanced ideas—or rather she advanced ideas for the fun of shocking her less brilliant audience.

Poor Evelyn, quietly eating her dinner and thinking of life in Kansas City, Kansas, would look up suddenly to hear Miss Jordan say:

"I believe in Mormonism. Every woman should have children. We should look the situation in the face and realize that there are a superfluous number of women and treat the matter accordingly. Every woman, too, should be able to support her children and be economically independent."

Miss Jordan had seen the world and was convincing. Evelyn inevitably felt that she was right. Then the picture of herself returning to Kansas City with this family she had the right to would flash across her mind, and she would shudder.

So, you see, Evelyn was acquiring atmosphere, though not so quickly as Miss Brown, who sat at the end of the table and affected anarchism. But Miss Brown was well poised, and in the midst of a wild dissertation on "spieling" at Bowery dances would ejaculate: "My God! What would they say in Seattle?" It takes a strong character to get two points of view at the same time.

It was in February that Evelyn Stimson really lost her balance. February is an unsettled part of the year always, and it takes a great mind to live in New York Bohemia and remain sane at any time.

Miss Jordan, who talked well, had been discussing alluring women. Max,

the artist, had agreed that it was better to be alluring than beautiful. He really became quite eloquent on the subject, because Miss Thompson, who was beautiful, had been lecturing him for mealings a model, and the subject gave him unlimited opportunities to come back at her.

"All women are who succeed," went on Miss Jordan. "I knew one once who was very alluring. She wasn't pretty, but she was clever enough to realize it. Her room was done up in Oriental effects, dim lights and much brass. It had atmosphere."

"Joss sticks," interpolated Miss Thompson.

"No, indeed. Nothing so crude as that. Oriental Bouquet, very expensive. Her gowns were of the filmy, lingering variety, too. About the time that she expected a man to call at her room she would sit down very quietly on the floor. When he knocked she would call out 'Come,' very absent-mindedly, and when he came in look up very much surprised and gasp, 'Why, I didn't dream it was you.' As he helped her up he naturally drew her to him. Any man would."

"He might have dumped her into a chair," contended Miss Thompson.

"Not the average man," was the general cry.

"She said it saved so much time," concluded Miss Jordan as the final bit of argument.

"If that didn't work she would go to her wardrobe under pretext of showing him a new gown, and bring out a ruffly thing and flaunt it in his face."

"She got that from 'Zaza,'" scorned Miss Thompson.

"No matter where she got it, it worked," said Miss Jordan.

There was a giggle of appreciation. Only quiet Miss Stimson took it seriously. When she went to her room her thoughts were bitter. She looked in the mirror of her pine bureau and scolded her frank little face.

"Alluring! You certainly are about as alluring as a Kansas prairie. So that is the way they do it! Well, don't think, Evelyn Stimson, because

you come from Kansas City, Kansas, that you can't be just as alluring as these New York women. You came to learn—now learn.

"Of course J. Wedgewood Ware isn't interested in you. Anyone, to look at you, would know what kind of a woman you are. There are thousands like you in Kansas."

Despite the hot tears in her eyes, she was dabbing rouge on her cheeks and penciling her eyebrows. She really did look very different. In fact, she was so amazed at what she saw that she stopped crying.

"Why not take a chance?" she kept whispering to herself, still gazing dreamily into the mirror.

No woman ever realizes her possibilities until she is dissatisfied. Evelyn began to search among her few treasures and discovered an Oriental band. It had once served as hat trimming, but wound about her dainty head, it made a very effective fillet. A pair of old-fashioned earrings, which she had never had the courage to wear before, produced a startling but interesting effect. The result was that she went to bed with a smile on her lips but bitterness in her heart at the thought that she had not known that she must be alluring. It was really only by chance that she had ever heard of it at all.

It took longer than you might think for Evelyn to clear the decks for action. She did not have much time to herself, but slowly the room was metamorphosed from a fresh, airy one to an Oriental dinginess. By the time the dusky curtains and wall hangings, brightened by the saffron pillows and subtle brass lamp, were in place, the table had quite forgotten the story. Only little Miss Stimson remembered—perhaps because of the continued indifference of J. Wedgewood Ware.

"He is very kind," she would reason to herself, "but Elbert Hubbard says it is easy to be kind to people you do not care for."

At last the room had acquired all the necessary stage setting. But how to get J. Wedgewood Ware to knock on the door! That was, after all, the most nec-

essary part of the drama. But Evelyn had been growing rapidly, though perhaps unconsciously.

That evening, dressed in her best gown for dinner, she looked J. Wedgewood Ware coldly in the eye and cut him. Surprise and confusion flickered over his face. No one had ever cut him before. What, he wondered, could be the matter? It surely must have been a mistake. He looked again, but still no recognition. The more he thought the matter over the more it annoyed him and aroused his curiosity. It is true that the greater reason a man has for believing himself infallible, the more a slight will worry him. He tried to lounge in the smoking room as usual, but the talk bored him. He put wild thoughts together, trying to decide why she had done it, but he could not get the picture of her out of his mind.

Upstairs Evelyn wound the Oriental band around her hair and painted her cheeks. The half-light was really becoming. Then she took her place on the floor and waited. How long would it be before J. Wedgewood would give in? A bell boy, looking for Miss Jordan, rapped and went away bewildered. Miss Thompson came in for a moment and looked mildly surprised, but when Evelyn explained that she was sick of looking sensible, nodded her head knowingly.

"I do it, too, sometimes," she said. "I know just how you feel."

Just when she felt that she could not stand the hard floor any longer a knock came. There was no enthusiasm in the tired voice that called out "Come." And J. Wedgewood Ware entered.

Evelyn had rehearsed the scene so many times, mentally, that she found herself saying quite mechanically, "Oh, I never dreamed it was you."

J. Wedgewood held out his arms and she scrambled up. She was far too strong and healthy to need much assistance. Still he held her hands after he had steered her safely to the couch so that the situation was not altogether lost. He gazed curiously about the room. What a disappointment it was! He had imagined from her everyday ap-

pearance that it would be cool and breezy—that she would be orderly. And what a stuffy mess! The walls were hung with a dark, dirty-looking silk, and the windows were fairly shrouded in gloom. Brass in all sizes cluttered the shelves or stood in the few vacant places. A sword or two decorated one end wall and on a little table was an open jar of cigarettes. Some odd Chinese cups surrounded a dull samovar. He hoped sincerely that she would not make coffee in it. But worst of all was the sickening odor which permeated every corner of the room. The Oriental Bouquet had been stronger than she realized. Besides, it had wonderful staying qualities.

At last J. Wedgewood turned his attention to her. Deep down in his heart he was a conservative, although the excitement of Bohemia had almost succeeded in crowding out the standard of "What's What" for "Who's Who."

J. Wedgewood Ware was a philanthropist—not a philanderer. If he was guilty of sweeping the tired bachelor maids of Bohemia off their feet, he was equally sure of leaving them firmly settled on a higher plane, with a broader outlook on life and a greater belief in the humanity of the world. Perhaps he had a false sense of his own worth, which made him withdraw from the victor's wreath and search for new cases more in need of a helping hand. And then he was a Don Juan, and they are always excusable because they are lovable.

He saw plainly that this little Western girl was being caught in the never-ending whirl, and he resolved to save her from herself. J. Wedgewood was philanthropic, as I have said, not because he was naturally kind, but because he was thirty-three. All bachelors between thirty and thirty-five have an attack of trying to be kind to people. It is simply a state, not a part of their nature. He may not have realized how interested he was in the girl, anyway. It was such a constant state to J. Wedgewood that one could hardly blame him for not analyzing it.

The first thing to do was to give her confidence in himself. And J. Wedge-

wood could be interesting. But even a brilliant monologist has his limitations, and there came a pause.

It was then that Evelyn thought of the Zaza act. She swayed languidly into the other room and came back with a ruffy white dress. She flashed it unexpected in his horrified face. Again that sickening odor. Even Evelyn herself was surprised, but a glimpse in the glass recalled her to her part, and she explained the beauties of the new gown to him. This girl was more than interesting. Could she, he wondered, have a dual personality? At least she was deserving of study, and J. Wedgewood began his "method."

Methods are peculiar to Bohemia. The men of the smaller towns never have enough experience to evolve one. But in New York, particularly in artistic circles, a man of the world not only has one but enjoys discussing it.

J. Wedgewood's method was called the "quick return"—to make ardent love, then to be very cold and conventional, then ardent love again. It sounds barbaric, on the face of it, but J. Wedgewood had tried many ways and declared it to be the best. Women said of him: "He is so elusive."

Evelyn continued to allure for several weeks. Gradually she became used to the stuffiness of the room and the Oriental Bouquet, so that they were quite a part of her life.

The "curtain raiser," as Miss Jordan called the feat of sitting on the floor and receiving the surprised caller, had only been arranged for one-night stands. And the evening's entertainment became the day's puzzle. She spent every minute possible at the theater studying the arts of famous actresses. Every movement, every tone was practised on the puzzled J. Wedgewood.

But even to Evelyn this alluringness was becoming monotonous and almost irksome. What was worse, she had begun to radiate "alluringness" in the fashionable girls' school where she taught. Miss Flambeau, the principal, shook her head over the matter. Evelyn was one of her best teachers, and yet there was some outside change in her

which was rapidly affecting the whole school of impressionable girls. She radiated a strange Oriental atmosphere, and her gestures were copied by the still awkward young ladies, so that they made themselves ridiculous. It must be the life she was leading outside the schoolroom which was changing her wholesome personality.

At chapel the next morning the clever Miss Flambeau took for her text: "And Moses looked this way and that. And when he saw no man, he slew the Egyptian and buried him in the sand."

"That is a very old text, young ladies," she said, "but it is very true to human nature. We do not slay Egyptians literally. They are not our rulers. But you will find that when people get away from home they do slay the conventions. It is a great temptation, when you get to New York City, especially, where better than any place in the world you can 'look this way and that and see no man'—at least, none who knows you—to let go a great many things which seem very vital to you among your own people."

Just then Miss Flambeau caught Evelyn's eye and realized she had come to her even better than she had hoped.

All the morning Evelyn handled her classes in a restless, nervous way. At two o'clock the conscience-stricken principal sent her off to chaperone a group of the girls on their horseback ride. In the open Evelyn was herself again. With a jaunty, boyish stride she flung herself into the saddle, much to the horror of the English riding master and the admiration of the young ladies. Her lungs filled with the delirious fresh air. She saw only endless prairies and whiffed the smell of the new earth greedily. The circling paths annoyed her. She rose in her stirrups and looked threateningly at the colorless blocks of Central Park West. She longed to stretch out her strong right arm and push them over. She felt crowded and oppressed by their dullness. She needed big things, much sky and freedom.

After leaving the young ladies at the school, she tramped home in her riding

habit. The thought of the Subway choked her. All unconscious of distance, she swung along, threatening small dogs with her riding whip or waving friendly greeting to the street vendors.

And then she opened the door of her room. The sickening Oriental perfume seemed to try to keep her from entering. She stood stunned. The hideousness, the smallness of it all, had never struck her before. And then she laughed, laughed at J. Wedgewood Ware, at Bohemia and even New York. She rushed to the window, but it was stuck fast. She looked at it a minute in dumb anger. Then she deliberately stood on a chair and kicked the glass out with her spur-trimmed boot. A terrific crash and then stillness. She waited for a minute to hear a frightened voice. Then she remembered that everyone was at dinner. She picked up a small brass bowl, struck the tragic attitude of the discus thrower, and sent it whirling to the patch of green in the rear of the Lowell. The samovar, being very heavy, slumped against the clothes pole, and it was this which attracted the attention of J. Wedgewood as he sat eating his dinner.

He got up and looked out in time to recognize a saffron pillow as it darkened the window pane on its way down. The napkin in his hand fell unheeded. He saw that the bit of grass was covered with brass and pillows. Even while he looked a small object rushed past and buried itself in the soft earth. He recognized a Chinese cup.

"Fire!" he muttered. "Her room is on fire!" And he rushed up the stairs. As he hurried in, Evelyn was standing at the window, a huge pillow poised on the sill. Her cheeks were flushed and her hair ruffled. Her sturdy riding boots were planted firmly apart, and all the energy in the slim figure in its trim habit was tense for the throw.

"Where is the fire?" gasped J. Wedgewood, letting the gilded axe drop to the floor.

"Fire!" chuckled Evelyn. "There is something worse than fire. I'm almost through—finished, I mean, to be more cultured. But I've finished with that,

too. I am through with the whole mess!" J. Wedgewood Ware stood astonished.

"The only thing left to throw is a candlestick apiece. Let's try for the center clothes pole, and the one who comes the nearest wins."

"But what have you 'finished'? What are you doing?" questioned J. Wedgewood.

"Why, I'm through being alluring," said Evelyn.

"Alluring!" puzzled J. Wedgewood.

"Yes; didn't you know I was being alluring?" asked Evelyn weakly.

"Do you mean by having this heathenish jumble in your room? Why, I have been trying to save you from being a Bohemian. You seemed so fresh and wholesome when you first came. I am so glad you are getting away from all this." And he drew her to him protectingly.

"Glad?" asked Evelyn, looking up from his shoulder. "Glad that I am not alluring? Why, you know you never noticed me until I was."

"It is because you are and you are not, if you know what I mean by that," said the great J. Wedgewood Ware.



THE SONGS OF PAN

By Glenn Ward Dresbach

WHY will you say that Pan is dead,
 With his reed pipes shattered and torn?
 I heard him play, where willows sway,
 By a stream of song that lilt away,
 A melody made in the morn.
 And he played of love and the sweets of a smile,
 And of dreams come true in the afterwhile,
 Of the rose that hides the thorn.

Why will you say that Pan is dead,
 With his reed pipes lost in the years?
 I heard him weep with winds that keep
 The toll of hearts on the land and the deep,
 And he played with the drop of his tears
 A melody made of the cries of the street,
 Of the endless throb of the passing feet,
 And of dead dreams and of fears.

Why will you say that Pan is dead,
 With his reed pipes blown apart?
 For still today you must hear him play,
 Nor Gold nor Hell can drive him away,
 In the fields of the sun or the mart.
 Oh, listen awhile! Ah, is he dead?
 Each day he has come as the years have fled,
 And piped the songs in your heart!

THE LAST CALL

By Richard Le Gallienne

I DON'T know whether or not the cry, "Last call for the dining car," affects others as it affects me, but for me it always has a stern, fateful sound, suggestive of momentous opportunity fast slipping away, opportunity that can never come again; and on the occasions when I have disregarded it I have been haunted with a sense of the neglected "might-have-been."

Not, indeed, that the formless regret has been connected with any illusions as to the mysterious quality of the dinner that I have thus foregone. I have been well enough aware that the only actual opportunity thus evaded has been most probably that of an unusually bad dinner, exorbitantly paid for. The dinner itself has had nothing to do with my feeling, which, indeed, has come of a suggestiveness in the cry beyond the occasion, a sense conveyed by the words, in combination with the swift speeding along of the train, of the inexorable swift passage and gliding away of all things. Ah, so soon it will be the last call—for so many pleasant things—that we would fain arrest and enjoy a little longer in a world, that with tragic velocity is flowing away from us, each moment, "like the waters of the torrent." Oh, yes, all too soon it will be the "last call" in dead earnest—the last call for the joy of life and the glory of the world. The grass is already withering, the flower already fading; and that bird of time, with so short a way to flutter, is relentlessly on the wing.

Now some natures hear this call from the beginning of their lives. Even their opulent spendthrift youth is "made

the more mindful that the sweet days die," by every strain of music, by every gathered flower. All their joy is haunted, like the poetry of William Morris, with the wistful burden of mortality. Even the summer woodlands with all their pomp and riot of exuberant green and gold, are anything but safe from this low, sweet singing, and in the white arms of beauty, pressed desperately close as if to imprison the divine fugitive moment, the song seems to come nearest. Who has not held some loved face in his hands, and gazed into it with an almost agonizing effort to realize its reality, to make eternally sure of it, somehow to wrest possession of it and the transfiguring moment forever, all the time pierced with the melancholy knowledge that tomorrow all will be as if this had never been, and life once more its dull disenchanting self?

Too soon shall morning take the stars away,
And all the world be up and open-eyed,
This magic night be turned to common day—
Under the willows on the riverside.

Youth, however, can afford to enjoy even its melancholy; for the ultimate fact of which that melancholy is a prophecy is a long way off. If one enchanted moment runs to an end, it may be reasonably sure for a long time yet of many more enchanted moments to come. It has as yet only taken a bite or two into the wonderful cake. And, though its poets may warn it that "youth's a stuff does not endure," it doesn't seriously believe it. Others may have come to an end of their cake, but its cake is going to last forever. Alas, for the day when it is borne in upon us with a tragic suddenness, like

a miser who awakens to find that he has been robbed of his hoard, that unaccountably the best part of the cake has been eaten, that perhaps indeed only a few desperate crumbs remain. A bleak laughter blends now with that once luxurious melancholy. There is a song at our window, terribly like the mockery of Mephistopheles. Our blood runs cold. We listen in sudden fear. It is life singing out its last call.

The time of this call, the occasion and the manner of it, mercifully vary with individuals. Some fortunate ones, indeed, never hear it till they lie on their deathbeds. Such have either been gifted with such a generous-sized cake of youth that it has lasted all their lives, or they have possessed a great art in the eating of it. Though I may add here that a cautious husbanding of your cake is no good way. That way you are liable to find it grown moldy on your hands. No, oddly enough, it is often seen that those who all their lives have eaten their cake most eagerly have quite a little of it left at the end. There are no hard and fast rules for the eating of your cake. One can only find out by eating it; and, as I have said, it may be your luck to disprove the proverb and both eat your cake and have it.

For a dreary majority, however, the cake does come to an end, and for them, henceforth, as Stevenson grimly put it, that road lies long and straight and dusty to the grave. For them that last call is apt to come usually before sunset—and the great American question arises: What are they going to do about it? That, of course, everyone must decide for himself, according to his inclinations and his opportunities. But a few general considerations may be of comfort and even of greater value.

There is one thing of importance to know about this last call, that we are apt to imagine we hear it before we actually do, from a nervous sense that it is about time for it to sound. Our hair perhaps is growing gray, and our years beginning to accumulate. We

hypnotize ourselves with our chronology, and say with Emerson:

It is time to grow old,
To take in sail.

Well and good, if it is and we feel like it; but maybe it isn't, and we don't. Youth is largely a habit. So is romance. And, unless we allow ourselves to be influenced by musty conventions and superstitions, both habits may be prolonged far beyond the moping limits of custom, and need never be abandoned unless we become sincerely and unregretfully tired of them. I can well conceive of an old age like that of Sophocles, as reported by Plato, who likened the fading of the passions with the advance of age to "being set free from service to a band of madmen."

When a man feels so, all is well and comfortable with him. He has retired of his own free will from the banquet of life, having had his fill, and is content. Our image of the last call does not apply to him, but rather to those who, with appetites still keen, are sternly warned that for them, willy-nilly, the banquet must soon end, and the prison fare of prosaic middle age be henceforth their portion. No more ortolans and transporting vintages for them. Nothing but Scotch oatmeal and occasional sarsaparilla to the end of the chapter. No wonder that some, hearing this dread sentence, go half crazy in a frenzied effort to clutch at what remains, run amuck, so to say, in their despairing determination to have, if need be, a last "good time" and die. Their efforts are apt to be either distasteful or pathetically comic, and the world is apt to be cynically contemptuous of the "romantic" outbursts of aging people. For myself, I always feel for them a deep and tender sympathy. I know that they have heard that last fearful call to the dining car of life—and, poor souls, they have probably found it closed. Their mistake has been in waiting so long for the call. From various causes, they have mismanaged their lives. They have probably lived in a numbing fear of their neighbors, who have told them that it is bad manners to eat

one's cake in public, and wicked to eat it in private; and anyone who is fool enough to allow his neighbors to live his life for him instead of living it himself deserves what he gets, or rather doesn't get.

A wholesome oblivion of one's neighbors is the beginning of wisdom. Neighbors, at the best, are an impertinent encroachment on one's privacy, and, at the worst, an unnatural hindrance to our development. Generally speaking, it is the man or woman who has lived with least fear of his neighbors, who is least likely to hear that last call. Nothing in retrospect is so barren as a life lived in accordance with the hypocrisies of society. For those who have never lived, and are now fain to begin living when it is too late, that last call comes indeed with a ghastly irony. But for those who have fearlessly lived their lives, as they came along, with Catullus, singing their *vivamus atque amemus*, and practising it, too, for those, if indeed the last call must come, they will be able to support it by the thought that, often as in the past life has called to them, it has never called to them in vain. We are apt sometimes to belittle our memories, but actually they are worth a good deal; and should the time come when we have little to look forward to, it will be no small comfort to have something to look back on. And it won't be the days when we *didn't* that we shall recall with a sense of possession, but the days and nights when we most emphatically *did*. Thank God, we did for once hold that face in our hands in the woodland! Thank God, we did get divinely drunk that wild night of nights in the city!

Wilt thou yet take all, Galilean? But these thou shalt not take,
The laurel, the palms and the pæan, the
breast of the nymphs in the brake.

It is the fine excesses of life that make it worth living. The stalks of the days are endurable only because they occasionally break into flower. It is our sins of omission alone that we come in the end to regret. The temptations we resisted in our youth make themselves rods to scourge our middle

age. I regret the paradoxical form these platitudes have unconsciously taken, for that they are the simplest truth any honest dying man would tell you. And that phrase recalls a beautiful poem by "E. Nesbit" which has haunted me all my life, a poem I shall beg leave to quote here, because, though it is to be found in that poet's volume, it is not, I believe, as well known as it deserves to be by those who need its lesson. I quote it, too, from memory, so I trust that the length of time I have remembered it may be set to my credit against any verbal mistakes I make.

"If, on some balmy summer night,
You rowed across the moon path white,
And saw the shining sea grow fair
With silver scales and golden hair,
What would you do?"

"I would be wise

And shut my ears and shut my eyes,
Lest I should leap into the tide
And clasp the seamaid as I died."

"But if you thus were strong to flee
From sweet spells woven of moon and sea,
Are you quite sure that you would reach,
Without one backward look, the beach?"

"I might look back, my dear, and then
Row straight into the snare again,
Or, if I safely got away—
Regret it to my dying day."

He who liveth his life shall live it. It is a grave error to give ourselves grudgingly to our experiences. Only in a whole-hearted surrender of ourselves to the heaven-sent moment do we receive back all it has to give us, and by the active receptivity of our natures attract toward us other such moments, as it were, out of the sky. An ever ready romantic attitude toward life is the best preservative against the *ennui* of the years. Adventures, as the proverb says, are to the adventurous, and, as the old song goes:

He either fears his fate too much
Or his deserts are small,
That dares not put it to the touch
To gain or lose it all.

And the spirit of the times is happily growing more clement toward a greater fullness and variety of life. The world is growing kinder toward the fun and foolishness of existence, and the energetic pursuit of joy is no longer

frowned down by anæmic and hypocritical philosophies. The old gods of energy and joy are coming to their own again, and the lives of strong men and fair women are no longer ruled over by a hierarchy of curates and maiden aunts; in fact, the maiden aunt has begun to find out her mistake, and is out for her share of the fun and the foolishness with the rest. Negative morality is fast becoming discredited, and many an old "Thou shalt not" is coming to seem as absurd as the famous Blue Laws of Connecticut. "Self-development, not self-sacrifice"—a favorite dictum of Grant Allen's—is growing more and more to be the formula of the modern world; and if a certain amount of self-sacrifice is of necessity included in a healthy self-development, the proportion is being reduced to a rational limit. One form of self-sacrifice, at all events, is no longer demanded of us—the wholesale sacrifice of our own opinions. The possibility that there may be two opinions or a dozen or a hundred on one matter, and that they may be all different, yet each one of them right in its proper application, has dawned forcibly on the world, with the conception of the relativity of experience and the modification of conditions. Nowadays we recognize that there are as many "rights" and as many "wrongs" as there are individuals; and to be happy in our own way, instead of somebody else's, is one of the first laws of nature, health and virtue. Many an ancient restriction on personal vitality is going the way of the old sumptuary laws. We have all of us amusing memories of those severe old housekeepers who, for no inclemency of the weather, would allow a fire in the grate before the first of October, and who regarded a fire before that date as a positive breach of the moral law. Such old wives are a type of certain old-fashioned moralists whose icy clutch on our warm-blooded humanity we no longer suffer. Nowadays we light our fires as we have a mind to, and if we prefer to keep them going all the year round, it is no one's business but our own. Happy is the

man who, when the end comes, can say with Landor:

I warmed both hands before the fire of life;
It sinks and I am ready to depart.

Such a one will have little need to fear that last call of which I have been writing. In Kipling's phrase, he has taken his fun where he found it, and his barns are well stocked with the various harvests of the years. Not his the wild regret for having "safely got away." Rather he laughs to remember how often he was taken captive by the enchantments of the world, how whenever there was any piece of wildness afoot he was always found in the thick of it. When the bacchantes were out on Mount Cithæron, and the mad *Evoel! Evoel!* rang through the moon-struck woods, be sure he was up and away, with ardent hands clutched in the flying tresses. Ah, the vine leaves and the tiger skins and the ivory bodies, the clash of the cymbals and the dithyramb shrilling up to the stars! "If I forget thee, O golden Aphrodite!" He is no hypocrite, no weary "king ecclesiast," shaking his head over the orgies of sap and song in which he can no longer share. He frankly acknowledges that then came in the sweet o' the year, and he is still as young as the youngest by virtue of having drunk deep of the only elixir, the Dionysiac cup of life.

At the same time, while he may not ungratefully rejoice with Sophocles at being "set free from service to a band of madmen," that ripening of his nature which comes most fruitfully of a generous exercise of its powers will have instinctively taught him that secret of the transmutation of the passions which is one of the most precious rewards of experience. It is quite possible for a lifelong passion for fair women to become insensibly and unregretfully transmuted into a passion for first editions, and you may come quite sincerely content that a younger fellow catch the flying maiden, if only you can catch yon flitting butterfly for your collection. And, strangest of all, your grand passion for your own re-

markable self may suffer a miraculous transformation into a warm appreciation for other people. It is true that you may smile a little sadly to find them even more interesting than yourself. But such passing sadness has the relish of salvation in it. Self is a weary throne. And the abdication of the ego is to be free of one of the burdens rather than the pleasures of existence.

But, to conclude, it is all too possible that you who read this may have no such assets of a willful well spent life to draw on as he whom I have pictured. It may be that you have starved your emotions and fled your opportunities, or you may simply have had bad luck. The golden moments seldom came your way. The wilderness of life has seldom blossomed with a rose. "The breast of the nymph in the brake" and "the chimes at mid-

night" were not for you. And there is a menacing murmur of autumn in the air. The days are shortening, and the twilight comes early, with a chilly breath. The crickets have stopped singing, and the garden is sad with elegiac blooms. The chrysanthemum is growing on the grave of the rose. Perhaps already it is too late—too late for life and joy. You must take to first editions and entomology and other people's interests in good earnest. But no! Suddenly on the wind there comes a cry—a sound of cymbals and flutes and dancing feet. It is life's last call. You have one chance left. There is still Indian summer. It is better than nothing. Hurry and join the music, ere it be too late. For this is the last call!

When time lets slip a little perfect hour,
Oh, take it, for it will not come again.



WHEN MY LADY SPEAKS

By Shaemas O'Sheel

WHO dreams of music sadder than the sigh
Of winds that fail mid quivering leaves and die,
And sweeter than the rippling of a stream,
And far more passionate than songs that seem
The very throbbing of young lovers' hearts,
And exquisite beyond a master's arts?
Oh, come, desirous dreamer; you shall hear
A music like the piercing of a spear
By Aengus flung athwart the stricken soul.
Despairing dreamer, have your dreams made whole!
We shall go to my lady, who will greet
Our coming with a welcome glad and sweet,
And we shall hear the beauty of her words
Singing about us like the mystic birds;
We shall be wrapped in wonder, and rejoice
In the strange harmonies that are her voice.
Oh, music, such as your fain spirit seeks,
Dreamer, is heard when my beloved speaks.

FIREFLIES

By Madison Cawein

THE night puts on a strange disguise,
A mask and domino of flame,
Through which I see her somber eyes
Gaze with a look that has no name;
Before which seems to grow a dream,
Taking the form of gleam on gleam.

A million lights, a million stars,
Of magic gold with emerald blent,
Between the woods and pasture bars,
Fashion another firmament
Of faery fire and elfin flame,
That puts the heaven above to shame.

The cedar and the oak are hung
With will-o'-wisps that never cease,
And dark the twinkling fields among
They loom like monster Christmas trees,
Around which glimmering glide and glance
The torches of a goblin dance.

What faery fête is this she dreams,
Old Night? What revelry of damps
And dews, in which her darkness gleams
Wild-jeweled, hung with pixy lamps,
That work illusions, mysteries,
Fantastic, in the eye that sees?

Each moment flames a fiery sign
From blade to bush, from bush to tree;
A web of lights, a flickering line
Of stars that twinkle constantly;
A pulse of gold that beats delight
Within the viewless veins of Night.

Oh, elfin raptures of the dew,
Oh, faery transports of the dusk,
Oh, let my spirit join with you
And dance within Night's heart of musk,
Until, like you, it comes to know
The ouphen wonders there that glow!

A SALES MANAGER'S LOVE AFFAIR

By Thomas L. Masson

DEAR MADAM:

You may remember that I met you the other night at a dance at the Smiths'. We sat in the conservatory and talked for quite a while. This is just to remind you who I am. Later on I may have something more to say; but I know you are busy, so I won't take up any more of your time.

Yours respectfully,
WILLIAM SPRIGGS.

DEAR MADAM:

Referring to my letter of the 21st, I desire to call your attention to some of my characteristics. I am temperate in my habits, well educated, am making a good income and have an ardent nature. Think this over.

Yours respectfully,
WILLIAM SPRIGGS.

DEAR MISS TILLING:

On the 23rd I wrote you calling attention to some of my admirable features. I enclose herewith a list of other young ladies to whom I take pleasure in referring. You will understand and appreciate the fact that each one of my former affairs is off, and will, I am sure, respect my confidence. Hoping to hear from you soon, I am

Yours sincerely,
WILLIAM SPRIGGS.

DEAR MISS TILLING:

It is not my intention to take up too much of your valuable time, but did you receive my letter of the 27th inst.? In case you did, will you kindly acknowledge receipt? I might mention that I speak French and German, and can make love in three languages. My sal-

ary has just been raised to five thousand a year. I enclose a note from my employer confirming fact.

Yours faithfully,
WILLIAM SPRIGGS.

MY DEAR MISS TILLING:

I don't wish to hurry you, but—think it over. I will pay you a sample visit on request at any time.

Yours very sincerely,
WILLIAM SPRIGGS.

DEAR MISS TILLING:

In reference to yours of even date, please understand that, while I should like to make a deal with you, my own time is limited and the spring season is coming on. I should advise you to look me up, and if you care to look over my line of samples, I will call at any time. But there are others.

Yours respectfully,
WILLIAM SPRIGGS.

DEAR CLARA:

My goods are always as represented. I am in no combination in restraint of trade, and being independent, I personally supervise the quality of my sentiment and guarantee it under the pure love act. A trial must convince you that my goods cannot be equaled. Please inform me if the samples submitted were satisfactory.

Yours to command,
WILLIAM SPRIGGS.

DEAR CLARA:

Your favor of the 3rd inst. duly received. I enclose one of my coupons. Please fill it out with your name and address. It insures a constant court-

ship on the installment plan, three nights a week for six months, followed by marriage. Remember that you are under no obligation in any way until final contract is signed. As my stock is limited, however, I advise you to reply at once.

Yours as ever,

WILLIAM SPRIGGS.

DEAR MADAM:

In reply to yours of the 15th inst., permit me to repeat that there is no ob-

ligation on your part. My business is such that out of every twenty letters received I expect to get only two favorable replies. I regret that I cannot make terms with you, but the fact that you have so many demands on your time is fully appreciated. Please return all samples, as I can use them with good results.

Yours very truly,

WILLIAM SPRIGGS.

Dictated, but not read.



THIS ONE TO YOU

By James William Callahan

LIKE autumn leaves on a stream, slowly flowing,
 Drifting o'er shallows and depths that are blue,
 Blown here and there by each breeze that is blowing,
 Caught in the eddies or whirled wildly through
 Swift rushing currents, the songs I am singing
 Are borne to the hearts of my friends old and new—
 Into love's harbor the ripples are bringing
 This one to you, sweetheart, this one to you.

Somehow, somewhere and sometime it will reach you,
 Bringing back perfumes of blossomy days,
 Though other lips may be trying to teach you
 How to forget—and sing far sweeter lays;
 Sometime, sweetheart, you will listen and hear it—
 Sometime, somewhere under heaven's broad blue,
 Like a leaf on the stream or a wandering spirit,
 The song I am singing will drift in to you.

Sometime perhaps in the golden October,
 Fancy will lead you down pathways of old
 To days ere realities somber and sober
 Clouded our sunsets of crimson and gold;
 Then, sweetheart, then will the song I am singing,
 As in the olden days, thrill you anew,
 All of the love of my heart in it bringing—
 Bringing to you, sweetheart, bringing to you.

A LETTER FROM HER LOVER

By John Regnault Ellyson

AS the letter contained, in my opinion, a very unusual story, parts of which at least I had long been familiar with through obscure newspaper reports and the court records of the day, I begged the privilege of its reproduction. This was granted on condition that all names be changed and every phrase pointing to the identity of the writer be omitted. The letter outlines a romance in real life such as the younger Dumas might have converted into a vital and memorable drama.

I have lingered for two hours at the window. It's wonderful—this slumber vision hung before open eyes—this strange reality that affects one like fantasy. I have watched the outside world as molded by the day and then remodeled by the going-down of the sun, by the twilight, the dusk of night and moonrise.

I cannot forget the last glimpses. The sky quivered with stars. The double line of palaces under the moon seemed a vista of many cloud citadels—white and irregular and changeable. The shadows were very deep, the lights magical. The illuminated windows glowed like gold; below human forms glided by as groups in some masquerade. The waters here were black as mirroring ebony, and there colored like jasper, and beyond they caught the sparkle of jewels by chance lights. Dark barges, freighted with men and young women, whose murmur and laughter echoed about my ears, came and vanished at every moment. What balm was in the air and in the soft wind fresh from the sea! And sometimes the notes of a flute or harp or guitar arose, and those vague snatches of music com-

pleted the delicious creation that amazed me and touched the most secret sources of emotion—unlike anything, if it were not like immortal beauty or a passion of youth once kindled and forever alive—only less mystical and only less profound than love in the soul of a man for the one among women.

Need I tell you I am in Venice? It was one of my early dreams, and now, while the city lies before me, I drift back to the point at which this and other dreams had birth.

How they gather about me—the recollections of my boyhood! I can see so well the home that, after my father died, became mine—the home of my companion of long ago. It's a picture I love—the gray house, the fields dipping toward the river, the dim hills, and here at my side my little idol, slender and dainty, with hair the color of bronze, with features already perfected in miniature, with innocent eyes and laughing lips. How sweet was life that was a part of hers!

There was no distinction between us in the household and no discord; we chose no mates and had no rivals. We came and went with the same impulse; we were inseparable. We lived and played together and learned our great lessons—a serious task, because we then enjoyed games and rambles and the building of castles among the rocks much better, and later we found more interest in love.

Do you remember those days, madam? You pledged yourself to many things, and we were happy. The first face I drew was yours, and you thought the drawing admirable and worth your praise. I have the little pencil sketch

still; it couldn't be bought at any price, and yet it doesn't truly resemble anything in the heavens or on the earth or under the waters. It's a sad caricature of your beauty, but I somehow caught the line of your brow, the shape of your eyes and some faint expression of your ever moving lips.

Last year, in Paris, I did a Psyche in marble. That was from memory. My friends flattered me and called it a masterpiece. The critics said the expression, though in itself thoroughly human and true, was almost too sad for the subject. But I always see you now through a kind of spiritual mist. I know not whether the melting lights are ever in your eyes, but I—well, I have often wept.

Do you remember your hands were wet with my tears when we parted? I always see you as I saw your face at that time—beautiful and very pale, chastened rather than stained by weeping; and so it was you left me with an impression that would forever haunt my soul.

Neither you nor I so warped the threads of life—it was destiny. I deplored the misfortunes of your father, coming so suddenly, so unforeseen. I respected his wishes. You followed them. I will not breathe even a murmur of reproach. I didn't then, and why now, after three years of silence and toil? But you will pardon me, perhaps, if I confess to the belief that it looks as though the end were shaped by the divinity that rules—by the divinity that changed the course of a singular destiny through a still more singular fatality.

I hastened back to Paris. There I rejoined Ashton and Folansby, my fellow students from New York. Was it not curious that I should have entered at once upon the path leading to my professional success? I say nothing of the temptations that beset me—they were not irresistible, as everybody said; they were absurd.

When I worked, I was at peace. While following the instructions of my beloved master, I didn't feel so keenly the cruelty of my fate. When I lingered over wine, when I sought recreation at

the little theaters and the gay resorts, when I thought to obtain forgetfulness in convivial company, in the midst of every scene here and there, can you fancy what occurred?

Your face arose, pale and charming. I always saw it in my dreams, but never did it come before my eyes in so divine a light as when I trespassed upon perverse ways. You led me back to my art—it was you who made and saved me.

My comrades often laughed at my boldness in plunging into this or that excitement, and at my subsequent confusion and recoil. They taxed me with caprice. What would they have said if they had but known the secret of my heart—if they had but got a glimpse of the vision that trembled like a glowing veil between themselves and me?

I heard in the same hour of the two events marking that fatal day—your marriage, and the death of the bridegroom as he passed from the foot of the altar. You will forgive me if I tell you that all that night, awake or sleeping, I held your hands in mine and spoke to you of love! And often this has happened—again and again with extraordinary vividness and reality during the long months that make up the three long years. I have wondered why God, who has been in many ways so kind to me, would not in such a moment permit my soul to take flight into the dreams beyond and thus blot out the living days.

And when I met our friend, Maubrey, from across the waters, I thought I understood. You know I always liked him, and you did, too, because he was sincere and strong. He was chary of his words, and so he is now, but you feel there are depths beyond depths within him, resources and power. He doesn't proclaim his attachment—he proves it by his acts; and hence the superior force, the inestimable worth of his loyal affection.

I say I understood. I may be still mistaken in my prospects and assurance for the future, but I have a conviction that the world rights itself in its slow way. My days are certainly brighter since he stumbled over my path. The gnarled

oak build of him and his earnest eyes and serious face have in them something of indescribable strength and rest; one would as soon doubt the depth of the sea or the purity of the sky.

That's what I felt. When I came in contact with him hope revived, and my spirit of ambition rekindled threefold. I couldn't at once just account for it, and yet I realized the influence. I worked so boldly, so tirelessly, with so daring an energy, that in the end I overtaxed myself and broke down.

I could not at first comprehend why he spoke of you so seldom and with such little freedom. I believed that he held back some details, and I feared the worst. I know now that his misfortunes, of which I had heard nothing, absorbed his thoughts. Besides, he had never seen you after we parted. I have since learned, too, that he was afraid of saying harsh things which might offend or discourage, for the delicate instincts of a great physician, despite all personal trials and unbelief, ever lead him to uplift and heal. That he felt very bitterly I know—a bitterness engendered and aggravated by his own experience.

When, three months ago, I fell ill, he had me immediately removed to his apartments. No brother could have shown more solicitude and more devotion. To relieve my mind, he took charge of my little affairs and managed them better than I ever did. In the chamber adjoining his own he hung by my side like a gracious shadow, exercised his uttermost professional skill, soothed me with the gentlest words and watched me constantly during several extremely critical days and nights without repose and without self-consideration. It was all done for love, for love of a simple comrade.

And this man, scarcely my elder by five years, and there regarded as the most eminent among the younger ones of his profession, is he whom the Colburns, through ingeniously devised fabrications, parted from the wife he adored, dragged into the courts, robbed of his practice and good name and forced into exile. But Paris, the mother by adoption of many another such man, cher-

ishes what the little towns despise—qualities of the soul, gifts, talents—the lover of real art, the priest with a gospel of humanity and the scholarly physician true to his great science.

One day, after my recovery, he said to me:

"You've pulled along bravely, and now you merely want a shift of scene and the Southern air." He smiled and added: "I've invested your little pieces of money, and I know what you can afford. Go to Naples first—there you will get new life under the finest skies in the world. A few days at Florence will give you tranquillity and tone. Afterward, see Rome, or the part of it that appeals and that will open up your art again and spread light all through you. Rest then at least a week in Venice, which is the place of all others to luxuriate in, and you'll come back and astonish your friends by the beauty of your work."

He would have accompanied me, but knowing how reluctant he was to leave Paris at this period of his career, and how much he had already sacrificed for me, I urged him to give up the idea. I promised to go alone and to follow his instructions to the letter.

At Rome I forgot for the moment everything but the marvelous world around me and the miracles of art on every hand. I saw things there impossible to conceive of, and wondered why a young sculptor doesn't instinctively divine that nowhere else in the universe are there such perfected realization, such power stilled into masterful repose, such infinite sources of inspiration.

But when I left Rome my personal griefs asserted themselves. Despite what Maubrey said, I was slow to get under the spell of Venice. It seemed that I brought away the shadows of the ruins with me—a feeling of isolation, a sadness, a great longing, a need of that for which there is only one name.

"Oh, God! Is it dawn? Can it be real? Has light come? Are the clouds passed?"

I kept repeating these words, glancing at Maubrey's letter and looking up at

the near objects, trying to reassure myself, and trembling with joy.

I had growled at the poor lad who woke me and presented the letter. I hadn't slept much all night, and I was sleeping so deeply when he came in. I had been utterly fagged and immensely depressed all day.

My studies in Rome were pursued with too much ardor, and, besides, on Monday I wore out my strength in my old sport of rowing. Today I had severe pains in my chest and my vision was fitfully dimmed. But when I tore open the letter I could see even in the twilight by the window, and I could breathe without a pang; and yet if someone had asked the day of the week, the hour of the day, my name, my occupation, I couldn't at once have answered. I was so far off—so carried away by the glad tidings.

I rang for the boy—one of those child servants you sometimes find in Italy—prompt, honest, faithful and charming. I had taken him with me in my excursions, and he had shown me the rags and gems of Venice. When he reëntered, I said:

"Nello—tell me, Nello, am I awake?"

"Surely, signor!"

"Then make light—plenty of light." and I slipped a gold piece in his hand.

In the obscurity he caught the color of the coin and hesitated. "It's yours," I added.

"Anyone had thought," he said, in soft Venetian phrases, "I'd brought you the Shrine of Our Lady!"

"That's what you've done," I cried, holding the dear boy in my arms. "And I thank you—indeed, yes, you've brought me the Shrine of Our Lady."

So Maubrey wrote you after I left Paris, and it was through this noble act of his that he learned of the great happiness in store for him. Is there anything that equals the wonders God works in secret for mankind?

To think of it—Marion, disowned by her people because she wouldn't submit to their schemes of new aggrandizement—because she refused remarriage, turned into the world, almost hopelessly ill—her life wrecked and her reason unsettled by the unimagined cruelties of the Colburns, sought you out and found shelter in your home! And you, scarcely more than a child, yet with supreme, motherly tenderness received her like a twin soul, and devoted all these months to this helpless and delirious girl, pouring balm on her shattered mind and raising her innately hopeful spirits by ministering to her broken health! And you and yours, despite the accepted impression, divined that Maubrey's case was one of genius unappreciated and honor maligned—that he was as high as the heart of any woman—as pure as and only less unfortunate than his idolized wife!

Maubrey writes that you and she have already sailed—that you are bringing to him Marion, restored by the grace of your fine skill—that you are coming to me because I wouldn't go to you!

My God! If I had known! Isn't this what we, poor fools, all say? The man, consumed with self and blinded, seeks oblivion everywhere in work or play; the woman finds some glorious task and fulfils it as the Master dictates.

If love immeasurable—if a lifetime of devotion—if a song of eternal praise can wipe away unhappy memories and atone for my unspeakable pride and selfishness—these are yours.

Tonight I shall mail in Maubrey's care this, my long letter, which I began four days ago, resumed two days after and now complete. I leave here in the morning on the very first outgoing train.

I don't know whether this or I will reach you first, but, believe me, love—oh, love of my soul—that neither the one nor the other can express the language of my heart!



THE UNDERTONE

By Robert Sloss

MR. ALFRED BANNISTER reluctantly unclosed his eyes and fixed them incuriously on the unwonted disarray of his boots beside his bed. He swallowed laboredly, turned his back to the midday light and coveted additional repose. His conscience remained undisturbed. He still vaguely blamed it all on the girl.

But later, as the cold water of his bath trickled down his spine, a stinging sense of proportion crept through his brain, and he muttered into the rough towel that he had been all kinds of a fool.

But Mr. Bannister was no fool. He had merely been mistaken about a series of phenomena entirely new to his experience. Had anyone advanced this consoling suggestion to him as he sat down to a self-prescribed cup of coffee, he would have replied that it made no difference in the net result. He had failed ignominiously with the girl; she had made that clear enough.

It had begun like a great many other seashore romances of Mr. Bannister's. She had not seemed different from other girls who had found him agreeable, and he had reasoned about her by analogy. All had been "merry as a marriage bell" till the analogy abruptly fell down.

By Jove, he reflected, she couldn't have talked to him straighter if she'd been a man! "Do you think your cheap little attentions can convince a woman in two weeks that you care for her," she had said, "or make her believe your attempt to kiss her is more than another of the trite pleasantries you think girls find so agreeable?"

He had no ready reply to this, and had said something about her apparently enjoying his society.

"Yes," she had answered, "I enjoyed you as I've enjoyed other men, and you other girls. But I've held you as lightly as you've held me and them. It's silly of you to expect me to take you seriously."

He had floundered before her then in an effort to take himself seriously. But everything he found to say proved so flatly obnoxious to her that she dismissed him finally with a peremptory refusal to listen to any more.

Then he had sought one of the distinctively masculine forms of solace. Therein lay the height of his folly, he told himself. She had said he was cheap; she had made him feel cheap. And yet she had seemed so dear that the moment drove him to mock heroics.

But, pshaw, that was the cheapest thing of all. The girl was right; he didn't care enough for that. He would go up to town and forget the whole affair. And having reached this conclusion, he rose and strode from the dining room, bent on never seeing the girl again.

But as he came down the hall she appeared suddenly in the great doorway of the hotel, all her young beauty heightened by exercise. He paused to allow her to pass on up the stairs and avoid him. But the instant she saw him she came directly to him. He bowed involuntarily.

"Mr. Bannister," she said, "I don't want you to misunderstand what I said last night."

"You were explicit enough, Miss Knowles," he replied, with a deprecatory smile.

"I meant to be," she said; "and I think you deserved all that. Only, I

don't want you to think I am ungrateful for all your kindnesses, since I was compelled to speak so slightly of them. You have been a very delightful companion. Let's part friends."

As she stood before him, her lithe figure poised straight as a sapling, the seriousness of her face framed by a mass of hair in which the morning wind had played the hoyden, her clear gray eyes squarely meeting his, there came again over Mr. Bannister that sense of her dearness which had driven him the previous evening to make what he considered a fool of himself.

He took her outstretched hand with an effort at formality. But at the warm touch of it his clasp tightened impulsively, as he said:

"I've made an awful mess of it, I know. Couldn't you give me another chance?"

"I have nothing to do with your chances. That is Dame Fortune's affair," she said coldly, releasing her hand.

"Yes, but you can seriously interfere with her affairs," he rejoined.

"Now you're getting silly again," she said. "I can't give chances any more than I can prevent you from what you men call 'taking a chance' when none is given."

"I'm sorry you think so ill of me," he said, genuine regret in his voice.

"Now you're stupid, as well as silly," she retorted curtly. "Here I am, taking the trouble, after you've been disagreeable to me, to explain that when you're not, I like you; and you insist on babbling about your chances."

"But if I promise never to be disagreeable again—"

"You can't promise anything of the sort. It all depends on circumstances."

"But you won't even let me try. You don't give me the benefit of circumstances when you say 'let us part.'"

"Circumstances brought us together," she replied; "they made us agreeable and disagreeable; and now they are going to part us."

"How?" he asked, startled at the thought of his already abandoned intention of going to town.

"Because I am leaving here this afternoon," she said.

"Why?" he demanded impulsively; then added seriously: "I hope I haven't driven you to this by my—silliness."

"Oh, dear, no!" she laughed gaily. "My two weeks are up, that's all."

"Well, I'm going to town this afternoon," he said eagerly. "Let me accompany you."

"No," she said quietly.

"Well, at least, you'll let me see you soon in New York?" he pleaded.

"I'm going to leave that to circumstances also," she said.

"You mean you won't let me call?" asked Mr. Bannister in desolation.

"Exactly."

"But that isn't fair. There isn't one chance in a thousand that we'll ever meet any other way there."

"There was just that much chance of our meeting here," she replied. "I think that's quite chance enough. If you had more, you'd be sure to get silly again and mistake it for a certainty."

"But you blamed me for trying to convince you in two weeks that I care for you. How am I ever going to do it if I'm not to see you? You're illogical," accused Mr. Bannister in desperation.

"I have no more to do with logic than with chance," she replied amusedly. "Besides, you can't convince me till you've convinced yourself."

"But, if you think that necessary, how do you expect me to do even that without seeing more of you?"

"You've seen quite enough to make that possible," she said lightly. "Now, good-bye; I can't argue any more, for I must go and pack."

Mr. Bannister bit his lip and took her proffered hand in a puzzled, perfunctory way.

"It's rather hard on me," he said, "but I dare say I deserve it. May I ask just one more question?"

She nodded interestedly.

"How do you think I'll know when I'm convinced? And how shall I let you know?"

"That's two questions," she laughed. "The latter I've already answered—circumstances, chance, logic—whatever

you choose to call it. As to the other," she went on more seriously, "the only way one can be sure is to feel one's utter need of someone."

"But—" began Mr. Bannister.

"Please—no 'buts'!" she said, and was going up the stairs, leaving Mr. Bannister in a very fretful and impatient, not to say profane, state of mind.

Of the many feminine prerogatives, perhaps the most disconcerting is that of the last word; but even that will not last forever. It is true that Mr. Bannister, upon his return to town, for a matter of several weeks searched directories and other sources of information that might possibly reveal a lady's address. But at the end of that time he found himself in possession of nothing more than the memory of an idyllic two weeks; and everyone knows that should not be expected to suffice the rest of one's life.

After a month Mr. Bannister again told himself he was a fool for allowing it to suffice that long. He assured himself the incident was not important enough for that. It was puzzling, to be sure; most of all, its effect on himself was puzzling. But one could not neglect everything to solve puzzles, most of which, he had found, concealed very commonplace explanations to reward one's pains. Besides, Mr. Bannister had not been trained to be kept waiting long by anything. So he resumed the not too imperative routine of his office, his clubs and the winter's social activities much as heretofore.

And he met the women he had known the previous season, plus a few debutantes, each of whom interested him momentarily. The others all presented either the added charm or inconsequence which another year bestows on woman according to her age. At least, so it seemed to Mr. Bannister.

Only Polly Prindle had perceptibly improved. She could keep any man awake, could Polly. To be sure, rather like cups of *café noir* in a brilliantly lighted drawing-room than like the soothing insomnia of moonlit summer landscapes, which hold one out of bed through sheer loathness to relin-

quish the sensation of their quiet beauty.

But Polly was good company—not obviously artful, and never so stupid as not to know how to meet all the simple little sallies Mr. Bannister had become expert at in his intercourse with women. That is why they drifted down the winter, with Mr. Bannister getting into the habit of escorting her to functions, because he found she had learned how to get the most out of such things for both of them.

On one of those warm evenings the end of April sometimes vouchsafes, they had dined rather garishly and gone to the play. The time was full of spring glamour, and during the ride home Mr. Bannister found himself holding Polly's hand and murmuring sentimentalities to which she responded with a demure but complacent discretion.

"Desist," she said at last breathlessly. "Your cab manners are perfectly stifling."

"You could make a man do anything," said Mr. Bannister.

"You might behave, then," she replied with fine feeling for the potential mood.

"You shouldn't blame me in the presence of such strong provocation," said he, possessing himself of her hand again.

"Well, let's not quarrel about it," sighed Polly; "quarrels are so silly, especially between friends."

"We do get on pretty well together, don't we, Polly?" said Mr. Bannister, leaning forward to look into her face.

"Well, I've always liked you, Alf, because you are such a delightful companion," said Polly, as if weighing carefully their compatibility.

The phrase gave Mr. Bannister one of those mental shocks so disconcerting to some of Dan Cupid's noblest works. Ah, if ladies but had such "intelligence of love" as to enable them to avoid encouraging that rare exotic by any form of words reminiscent of past performances!

"Delightful company!" Somehow it did not sound like Polly. Whether by virtue of the summerlike night, his own not totally unrecognizable state of mind

or whatsoever apt combination of nature's necromancy, the words grated over a groove in Mr. Bannister's consciousness, broke the spell of this occasion and set up a comparative philosophy of it and another upon which he had characterized himself as a fool.

Consequently, Miss Prindle was so vexed at the ride's ending in a perfunctory request that he might call soon, that she suddenly found herself engaged for every evening that week. And Mr. Bannister was so vexed with himself that he dismissed his cab and walked aimlessly in the general direction of his apartment.

He strode swiftly down the Avenue for some distance, then turned impatiently into a cross street. Waiting conveyances lined the roadway and strains of music pervaded the quiet residence block. Somewhere an orchestra of no mean complement was essaying Beethoven, the Ninth Symphony's *allegro* immortal gladness of summer rain with sweet thunder of the kettledrum running through it like the laughter of Jove.

The melody was made as a benison to perturbed spirits, and, across from the house with the carriage canopy Mr. Bannister paused to shift his overcoat to the other arm and secure his handkerchief. He was hot and tired and quite crestfallen. Again he told himself vehemently, as he mopped his brow, that he had been all kinds of a fool. Again he felt cheap, and, he reflected, he had been cheap, and had been winning Polly by those "cheap little attentions" which the other girl, who had also admitted that he was a "delightful companion," had flung in his teeth.

She, he remembered, had frankly appropriated what she chose of him, and discarded the rest, instead of accepting him at his own valuation—as, he averred with a shudder, Polly would have done in another moment. Every woman to whom he had ever been attracted had been as plain to read as poor Polly—save one. Why had he bothered his head about them? And there swept over him a fine disgust with all the things he did bother his head about, none of which, he felt, he needed half so much as even the

memory of the girl who could induce this unwonted reappraisal of himself.

The orchestra had ceased, and with an involuntary gesture of hopelessness he started on. Then he halted. A pure liquid soprano began to float out upon the night and held him listening. It was not the sprightly little ballad, faultlessly executed, nor the plaintive recurrent minor in which it died away at last. The voice itself seemed to touch the edge of a memory and leave it groping.

Annoying speculation was soon satisfied, however, by his sudden recollection of a promise. It was lucky he had heard that voice; it would be the very one to secure for Mrs. Parret's final musicale. That lady had obligated him to get her something new for the occasion, artfully assuring him he alone could do so, for he was "so clever about unearthing artistic creatures."

Ascertaining from a coachman that the house with the canopy was the Greilles', he walked on. He knew them very slightly, but they were quiet people and did not move in his set. So much the better; the soprano would be entirely new to Mrs. Parret.

Next morning at his office a search of all the newspapers revealed no notice of the performers at the Greville musicale. He despatched a polite note, however, with a prettily turned compliment or two, which in a couple of days brought a reply. Mrs. Greville regretted she could not recall the name and address of the soprano in question, but they could undoubtedly be learned from Doctor Anton Glatz, who had sent her several of his best pupils for the evening's entertainment to which Mr. Bannister was pleased to refer so flatteringly.

Impulsively Mr. Bannister seized the telephone, but when he finally succeeded in impaling Herr Glatz on the other end of the wire, that personage proved a difficult interlocutor. By dint of many repetitions he managed to convey to Herr Glatz what he wanted, but of the replies he could make little more than a sort of gargle interspersed with a word now and then.

"Ach!" at last shouted the excitable

Doctor over the wire; and then, speaking with distinct pauses between his words made it understandable that the young lady would be in his studio for a music lesson at eleven that very morning.

There was nothing for it but to journey up to the Co-operative Music Studios, and shortly after the hour Mr. Bannister sent in his card to Herr Glatz and seated himself in the reception room. Not far off someone was singing an aria. He had just assured himself that it was the same voice which had held him in front of the Greville windows when it suddenly ceased. A few moments afterward the door behind him opened softly.

Mr. Bannister rose and turned expectantly. There stood Miss Knowles, smiling her comprehension of the fact that he was utterly dumfounded.

"Were you really looking for me, Mr. Bannister?" she said, her voice brimming with laughter.

"Yes, I was," he broke forth in quick appeal, "though I didn't know it myself. Won't you listen to me now?"

"That depends," she replied, with a quizzical look. "But I've enough feminine curiosity to wonder what you will find to say, so sit down."

"I know the past doesn't entitle me to much consideration," he said humbly. "I gave up looking for you very quickly last fall, and tried to forget you. I thought I had managed it, when something happened the other day that showed me I couldn't. You come back again and again like a strain in the song I heard you sing, without knowing it was you."

"Did you really stop in the street and listen? And were you so charmed as you said in your note?" she inquired roguishly.

"Did you read it?" he asked, bewildered.

"Certainly," she replied. "And I answered it with my own hand."

Mr. Bannister looked his speechless surprise.

"You see," she went on, "I'm Mrs. Greville's niece. I belong out West, where I was brought up on the 'poor but proud' principle. But I've been trying to study music on my own account here for the past few years. I'm rather independent about making my way, and when you met me I was being rather independent in spending my little vacation in my own way."

"And you punished me in your own way, too," he said reproachfully, "and made me waste another whole winter."

"Well, otherwise you might have succeeded in making me waste it, too," she retorted laughingly. "You were not fit company for an honest working girl, and, after all, you got on without me quite well."

"No, I didn't!" he said earnestly. "Won't you believe that, or let me try to make you believe it?"

Just then, heralded by an elaborate clearing of the throat, the portly form of Herr Glatz appeared in the doorway. He gazed indulgently at his pupil.

"Oh, dear Herr Glatz, forgive me for keeping you!" said Miss Knowles, springing up. "This is a very old friend of mine; Herr Glatz, Mr. Bannister. I think I will let him take me home now; he has a great deal to tell me."

"Ja wohl," assented Herr Glatz, his eyes twinkling with the playfulness of a pachyderm; then, raising a warning finger, he said: "Be very careful of your voice, *liebchen!*"

"Oh, I shall," she said; "Mr. Bannister is going to do all the talking."



MANY a man puts up a perfectly good bluff and then falls off the edge of it.

PECULIARITIES OF LOVE

By H. E. Zimmerman

SHORT to say, easy to write, hard to escape.

Difficult to believe in when you haven't it.

The indestructible phoenix of the emotions.

An advance loan of heaven—and other places.

A mystery which none but a fool would seek to solve.

Strongest in the strong, but not always best in the good.

A tyrant whose caprices take no account of men's deserts.

The greatest leveler, except death, of human distinctions.

A lottery which awards a prize and a penalty rolled in one.

More engrossing than any other mental attitude except vanity.

Unpurchasable at any price, given too often for far less than nothing.

A prize too great either for man's earning or enjoyment.

Denied to kings, ignored by rich fools, the comfort, hope and salvation of poor men.



MRS. RICH—Tell me, please, Mme. Beautydoctor, how soon will you make me handsome enough to wear colors that aren't becoming to me?



LOVER (*humbly*)—She is a fool to want me.

FRIEND—Why, old man, you're perfect mates.

A COUVERT

By Clematis White

SCENE—A dinner party. The table, the dominant note of which is a great display of nameless, assorted silver, is set for twenty persons. In its center, flanked by marrons glacés and sugared cherries, stands a pyramid of orchids and mauve ribbon. MRS. HARDING, a divorcee, a tall, fair woman, her hair changed by art to a lighter hue although not noticeably, with a complexion of distinct pallor from which the dark eyes and red lips stand forcibly forth to seize one's attention and engross it, is one of the guests. In the chair at her left is seated PHILIP SELDON, a gentleman, vigorous and distinguished, with a strong head and eyes fringed with thick black lashes. Their conversation is carried on in the midst of the general hum of talk going on around the table, with frequent interruptions caused by remarks from other guests.

MRS. HARDING (her voice, although naturally sweet, now rising to an affected society pitch)

Dear me, Mr. Seldon, do you know you have a very intrusive personality? I've just been thinking of you. This is kind of Edna to put me next you. (*Under her breath.*) I've 'phoned you a great many times in the last week but found it hopeless. Not a letter answered. Explain, please.

SELDON (with perfect control)

Yes, Edna was always my friend. (*Sotto voce.*) Sorry I've been away.

MRS. HARDING

I know you have; but Max Raynour said you left the Springs last Wednesday, and it is Tuesday now. Lots of time unaccounted for, Noddy.

SELDON

Do be careful. You've no notion how your voice carries. (*Turning to dinner guest on left.*) Rather rotten wind—what? (*To himself.*) Great God, what a prospect, with Betty on the other side of the table! But it has to be done.

MRS. HARDING (her voice modulated to a painful cheerfulness)

You haven't answered my question yet, Noddy.

SELDON (with an assumption of unconcern)

No? What was that?

MRS. HARDING (reproachfully, eyes wide)

You wouldn't have forgotten a question I asked a year ago. I mean about writing.

SELDON (loudly)

Racing is a bore when one has to remain up the whole night. (*In a low voice, uneasily.*) I left there Wednesday; then went to the Varicks' at Lenox.

MRS. HARDING

Um'm. Emma Varick hates me. That's why I wasn't asked. (*To her ordained partner on her right.*) I'd as soon be in the Elevated at the rush hour as go to one of her crushes. (*In a lowered voice.*) Well, I'm waiting, Noddy.

SELDON (nervously)

Oh, the same old crowd—the Burchards, the Morleys—

MRS. HARDING

And?

SELDON (trying to speak carelessly)
The Dorsets—

MRS. HARDING (her eyes narrowing)

Oh! The Dorsets! Was the beautiful Elizabeth there?

SELDON (*doggedly*)

Yes.

MRS. HARDING (*softly*)

And you were there a week, and never a line. What offense have I committed? I'm fearfully repentant.

SELDON (*to dinner companion*)

Quite right. She sent him off to Paris, I believe. (*Vaguely, trying to gain time.*) Repentant?

MRS. HARDING (*gently*)

Penitent, Noddy; dreadfully so. Oh, I know you've heard all about Raynour. But there's not one word of truth in it. I only took him up in your absence. It's the truth.

SELDON (*coldly*)

Yes? I hadn't heard it.

MRS. HARDING (*in answer to butler's query*)

Yes, Hock, please. (*Anxiously, to SELDON.*) You're sulking over something. You know I'm mad about you. My heart is going like a trip hammer. I'm still as silly as a débutante about you.

SELDON (*to himself*)

Lord! I wish I'd written. It's worse than coursing hares. (*With napkin to mouth.*) For heaven's sake, pay some attention to your companion. The eyes of the whole table are on you.

MRS. HARDING (*with a little gasp*)

You are rude. This last separation hasn't brought you any nearer me. You seem miles away.

SELDON (*to himself*)

There must be an end to this soon. (*Catching Miss ELIZABETH DORSET's innocent eyes, he smiles softly. Speaking a shade louder and measuredly.*) I'm not annoyed at anything, on my honor; and I didn't write because I didn't care to.

MRS. HARDING (*shrinking in a huddled manner in her seat, repeating slowly*)

You didn't write—because—you—did—not—care—to!

SELDON (*under his breath*)

This is raw, but it's the only way. (*Answering dinner partner.*) Grahame-White—rather—the best I think.

MRS. HARDING (*faintly*)

Noddy, Noddy.

SELDON (*brutally*)

Please don't call me by that ridiculous name.

MRS. HARDING

My God! Ridiculous! It's only pretense. You are trying to test me. Tell me you are trying to prove me.

SELDON (*in desperation*)

It's the truth.

MRS. HARDING (*her face icy white*)

What's the truth?

SELDON

That it is over, ended, done with. (*Catching the growing horror in her eyes.*) Steady there! Try some champagne.

MRS. HARDING (*under her breath*)

I don't believe it. I don't believe it. It's a lie.

SELDON (*looking straight before him*)

Come, Laura, you'll have to face it. It's the end.

MRS. HARDING (*with a shudder*)

You swore again and again it would never end. (*Very low.*) God! God!

SELDON (*to partner on left*)

I beg your pardon! (*Passing marrons*)

MRS. HARDING

Who's the woman?

SELDON

Do you think that quite fair to ask? (*SELDON's eyes meet Miss DORSET's. He smiles. MRS. HARDING intercepts the look, understanding downing in her eyes.*)

MRS. HARDING (*slowly and bitterly*)

So that's the woman!

SELDON (*watching her with intentness from under half-closed lids*)

Yes, that's the girl. You had to know it; perhaps you had better know it now.

MRS. HARDING

You couldn't be merciful. You didn't dare tell me at home. I see; it was all carefully planned—your battlefield. (*Through clenched teeth.*) You are trying—me—beyond—my—powers—of—en-

durance. Aren't you proud of taking me at a disadvantage? It's a gentlemanly thing to do!

SELDON (*to butler*)

Grand Marnier, please. (*To himself*) I deserve all I'm getting.

MRS. HARDING (*fingering nervously the pearls at her throat*)

I wouldn't treat a dumb animal as you've treated me tonight. It hurts. (*Sobbing under her breath.*) It hurts.

SELDON (*divining the dearth of noises at the dinner table*)

For heaven's sake, try to control yourself.

MRS. HARDING (*her eyes dilating*)

Ah—you're afraid!

SELDON (*in desperation*)

Be careful, I say.

MRS. HARDING (*lifting tragic eyes to his*)

You're like all cowards; they dare not meet you in open combat. They must be surrounded by followers. Coward! Coward! You're afraid she'll know!

SELDON (*his face flushing*)

Yes, I'm afraid.

MRS. HARDING

You were very careful of my feelings once, and now I don't count. Haven't you any pity? (*In answer to her dinner companion, fretfully.*)—Oh, I don't know—I don't know.

SELDON (*to himself*)

And I thought her mouth beautiful once. (*To her.*) Yes, where she is concerned. She is the dearest thing in life to me.

MRS. HARDING (*with a note of despairing appeal*)

How you goad me! You don't care what becomes of me.

SELDON (*uneasily*)

Oh, yes; but it's not the same.

MRS. HARDING (*drawing in her breath sharply on the words*)

Say that again, Judas! Judas!

SELDON (*gravely*)

I repeat, it is not the same.

MRS. HARDING (*assuming a desperate calmness*)

What's not the same? Explain yourself, if you don't want me to despise you more than I do.

SELDON

You make it very hard, Laura, but you will have it. (*Savagely.*) You're divorced, and—well, she's a girl.

MRS. HARDING (*trying to control her trembling voice*)

So was I a girl. I don't understand you.

SELDON (*insolently*)

Don't you? Well, I'm sorry for you. That's what I mean; that's the difference. It's your outlook. I'm afraid she could see it, and if she did it would finish it.

MRS. HARDING

You are very sure of me, are you not? If I should make a scene, you mean it would be broken—ended?

SELDON (*steadily*)

Yes, just that.

MRS. HARDING

Do you think you deserve I shouldn't?

SELDON

I don't deserve anything of your kindness. But you wouldn't compromise yourself so. You care too much for your position..

MRS. HARDING

Yes, that's the fly in the amber. Otherwise I should act like a human being, a woman with red corpuscles in her veins. Position! You are right. Otherwise I'd denounce you as a contemptible thing—a man who had taken five of the best years of a woman's life; who stole her minutes, her days, her thoughts, her soul; who swore with all the tenderness he was capable of that he loved her, worshiped her, and would protect her as long as breath remained in his body. Position! (*Hysterically.*) It prevents my telling that the man who has done all this is brutal and cowardly enough to tell her before forty peering, inquisitive eyes, anxiously waiting to see him turn the screws, that he is weary, tired of her, done with her. It was the refinement

of cruelty. Position! It denies me the consolation of laying my head on the table before me and weeping my heart out. (*Fiercely.*) Oh, cruel—cruel—cruel!

SELDON

It doesn't avail much, I'm afraid, to say it, but on my soul I'm sorry. Try to control yourself.

MRS. HARDING

Don't fear. You have set your scene too well. I'll not give way. Sorry—oh, my God! (*With a choking sob.*) He's sorry!

(*A long pause. MRS. HARDING sits with set face, eyes staring unseeing before her. SELDON listens with deaf ears to the prattle of his companion on the left. He looks up, sees the hostess rising from the table and touches MRS. HARDING. She starts nervously. They rise.*)

SELDON (*very pale*)

I am all that you would say of me—think of me. But I want you to know I admire you very much. I won't insult you by saying I'll always be your friend. That can never be between you and me. I admire and respect you.

(*SELDON bows gravely. The gentlemen remain standing. MRS. HARDING finds herself before MISS ELIZABETH DORSET at the drawing room door.*)

MISS DORSET

Oh, Mrs. Harding, such a duck of a gown! It looks like Callô; is it?

MRS. HARDING (*after a pause, taking a long breath*)

No, Beer. (*MRS. HARDING's world has claimed her.*)



LOVE SONG

By Charles W. Snow

THE midnight air breathes a balmier breath
Than any I've felt before;
The billowy clouds gather fleecier crests
As they roll to some far-off shore;
My childhood's dream of the genial smile
On the moon's round face comes true,
And the stars are writing glad letters of love
In glorious symbols to you.

'Tis the light of your eyes that opens mine
To the light of the poet's dream;
'Tis the touch of your hand that thrills my heart
With the God of the moon's soft beam;
'Tis the wealth of your soul that pours through me
The joy that can never find tongue—
The joy that may lead to a song of love,
But leaves the best unsung.

MIMOSA

By H. W. Richards

THEY named her Mimosa, very appropriately, too, for Ceylon was her sire and Sensitive her maternal ancestor.

Weird stories are told of the sensitive plant—how it trembles and shudders at the sound of a strange voice—how it curls up its leaves when a stranger comes near. Those who tell them say there is something mysteriously evil in this display of aversion, abhorrently supernatural in this possession of the two senses, hearing and feeling, which causes a creeping sensation, a nervous desire to avoid its presence and escape its irritating influence.

And Mimosa had these peculiarities of the plant. At the sound of a strange voice she would tremble as if stricken with a chill, and if a stranger came near would shrink back with dilated eyes, while the veins made a network beneath her chestnut coat. This sensitiveness was not fear, for fear was unknown to her. The violent storms, accompanied with thunder and lightning, so frequent in the Blue Grass country gave her no concern; nor did the flash and noise of firearms, even the whistle of bullets, alarm her. On threshing days, when the great engine—terror of the other horses—came, she hardly gave it a passing glance, though she was feeding barely twenty feet from where it was placed. The engineer, determined to startle her, several times blew the whistle, but not for a moment did she stop cropping the grass; yet when he came to the fence and spoke to her, never so kindly, she drew back shivering, with big eyes, nostrils all wide and prominent veins. She was not vicious. Never had she offered to bite,

never lifted a foot to strike or kick a human being.

There was no bar on her pedigree, for she had the famous Water Witch cross. For over a century her ancestors had been racing kings and queens, each of which had not only great speed, but was game to the marrow and could carry weight and go distance. She was beautiful even for a thoroughbred, tall and stately in repose, grand when in action, her long stride eating up distance. Mimosa had another peculiarity, a passion for music. Negro lads, strumming the banjo had in her an attentive listener; and old George's fiddle delighted her. From the day of her birth she was the subject of much comment in the Blue Grass country, where her breeding, beauty and great promise, as well as her peculiarities, were well known. After her yearling trials old turfmen congratulated her owner and breeder, Col. Clarkson Moore, predicting that she would be surely the greatest two-year-old of her year, if not of all time.

But Col. Moore had his fears and doubts. That the filly had great speed and could maintain it under any racing conditions he was positive, but her sensitive disposition might make all her natural gifts worthless. His efforts to cure or abate the evil had failed. He could find no cause for it. For four generations he had known her ancestors, sires and dams—and none of them was so afflicted. In turf history he could find no case like hers. He had great hopes that she would outgrow this sensitiveness, though he feared the possibility that it might become more pronounced with age. The winter dragged along. He was anxious to have the

matter settled, yet when the racing season opened he hesitated. At times he believed it would be wisdom to wait another year, but the wish to have his horses earn money was too strong to resist. In August he took her to the track. She had five stake engagements in the West and if she won he would take her East. At the track Mimosa's behavior gave him little encouragement. His intention had been to give her a race before starting her in the stake events, but he gave up the plan. So it was in a stake race that Mimosa for the first time went to the post.

With great anxiety Col. Moore watched her in the paddock, half in doubt, half in confidence, painfully conscious that his own nervousness was not improving her chances. When she went out he hurried to the infield, mounted his pony and cantered across lots to the post. Mimosa had no famous jockey to guide her; the Colonel selected his own apprentice boy—wisely giving him neither whip nor spurs. At the post was great confusion. The big voice of the starter, the many oaths which made his commands emphatic, the crack of his assistants' whips, the rough manner in which they seized horses by the bits, the breakaways and recalls, made Mimosa sick and shivering. For the first time the Colonel thought racing cruel sport and the method of starting a farce. He grew sick at heart. If Mimosa would only run her race, only cover that five furlongs faster than the rest, only get to the wire first, he would be richer by six thousand dollars, and he needed the money. Then the flag dropped.

For a moment Mimosa stood trembling like an aspen—at first the Colonel believed she had refused to break—then she moved slowly after the field, settling easily, gracefully, but leisurely into her stride. Her chances looked hopeless, for the leaders were twenty lengths in front, increasing their advantage at every jump. Col. Moore waited until sure she was improving her position, and turning his horse, galloped toward the winning post, watching the race as he rode. Around the far turn Mimosa began to show her great speed and was gaining

fast. Then came a great hope—she might win! A hundred yards from the track he stopped, anxiously waiting the end. They had reached the home stretch; she was not six lengths from the leaders, closing the gap as if she had wings. She would win! The exultant thought was changed to alarm; he heard the yells from the grandstand, causing his eyes to drop—he could not see her fail. When he looked again he saw her, a frightened bird, dash under the wire first. He was faint, sick, dizzy; then he was in the track standing at her head while the boy removed the saddle. He did not leave her until dark.

Her last race in the West gave him great satisfaction. For the first time she broke with the leaders, went at once to the front, and ran so easily that the race was never in doubt. The track record for six furlongs was 1:14½ and she reduced it a half-second. This performance was so good that Col. Moore decided to take her East, where she had three stake engagements, two of which would be at her mercy, while in the Columbia, for seven furlongs, value to the winner, \$27,500, she would meet the unbeaten Tyrant. Let her defeat him and she would be the greatest two-year-old of the season.

The change to the East was not at first to Mimosa's advantage. She became as sensitive as ever—if possible, more so; and for two weeks the Colonel watched her with the greatest care. However, she won her first engagement handily and the second with ease. With great confidence Col. Moore awaited the real test of her worth—the contest with Tyrant. Then came misfortune. The boy who had ridden Mimosa in all her races, who understood her peculiarities, and in whom she had great confidence, was thrown and hurt. To find another jockey was no easy task. There was a boy, Morrell, whose reputation was already great. The boy had ability and won many races; but this ability consisted largely in energy; he could not manage a horse with gentle tact. But the time was short and Col. Moore made a hasty decision: Morrell was to work the filly,

and if all went well he would be given the mount. With sullen indifference he heard Col. Moore describe Mimosa's peculiarities, how carefully she had been trained, and heard with disgust that she must be ridden without whip or spurs. Had Morrell shown judgment he might have managed Mimosa, but his curiosity was great and he wanted to learn if she had the speed the Colonel claimed. Mimosa did not like him; his clumsy hands annoyed her, and he swore at her. Morrell became angry. An apprentice boy gave him a whip. One vicious cut was enough. Mimosa neither plunged nor swerved—just bobbed up and down without advancing or receding.

Col. Moore's anger rose when he saw the boy borrow the whip. When he reached the jockey he was about to strike again.

"Don't you hit her again!" shouted the Colonel. "Get off at once, you ruffian! You can't ride my horse."

Gently he took the filly by the bit and led her to the stable. For hours he petted her, talked to her, trying his best to calm her, without success. Noon came and she hardly tasted her food. At last the Colonel took a chair, filled his pipe and sat down in front of the stable to think over matters. The Columbia would be run in five days; Mimosa needed a workout and a trial. As it was she was fit for neither. Something must be done or all chance was gone. He must get a jockey. As he thought of the boy Morrell his anger blazed.

Five days more and then the Columbia. The meeting would open with the stake event for its feature. They were now racing at another track, and it was very quiet here; that was one thing in his favor. But the jockey! Whom could he get? He heard a banjo twang; someone, with no little skill, was picking out "Old Folks at Home." There came two spirited breakdowns and at last "My Old Kentucky Home." Though his pipe had gone out, Col. Moore pulled away vigorously, firm in the belief that he was having a good smoke, and positively certain he was

enjoying the music. He forgot his troubles and was back in Old Kentucky, and he liked it much better there. With a twang the music stopped. A low whinny ended the Colonel's reverie, and turning, he saw Mimosa looking from her stable window with bright, interested eyes. Suddenly the thought came; there might be a chance. A jockey, neat, alert, intelligent, was passing.

"Can you tell me, son, who that is playing the banjo?" the Colonel asked politely.

"Mr. Graydon. He plays always in the afternoon when he has nothing to do. The horses like it just as well as we do." The boy spoke the name with great respect.

Mr. Graydon—Robert Graydon—in an instant Col. Moore had gone back twenty years to the time when he had come East with Asteroid and had beaten the flower of the three-year-olds, and it was Robert Graydon who then rode for him. He had decided: Robert Graydon should ride the horse. To his dying day Col. Moore believed Providence furnished the jockey for Mimosa. He thanked the boy with stately politeness, stepped to the filly and said a few kind words and went to look for Graydon. With frankness Col. Moore told his story, and Graydon, who was more than a great jockey—a thorough horseman—listened with interest and sympathy. Then Col. Moore made his request.

"I know of no reason why I can't ride for you," was the prompt answer. "I believe the filly has a good chance, although I know Tyrant to be a great colt."

"Mimosa has a splendid chance if that ruffian Morrell hasn't ruined it," wrathfully said the Colonel.

He strummed his banjo as he walked to the stable and when quite close to her stall played again, "My Old Kentucky Home," talking to the Colonel in a low voice. At last he placed his back against the door, and, without talking, played the air more softly. The sight appealed to Col. Moore, whose love for a horse was as great as an Arab's. Mi-

mosa listened, then came nearer, close to the jockey's shoulder, and at last laid her nose against his neck. Her nervousness was gone, and never had she been so self-possessed since leaving the farm. Col. Moore had read stories in which memory and even reason had been called back by a familiar face, voice or song. To him a horse was little less than human. For a lifetime he had studied their moods, peculiarities, whims, likes and dislikes. Then the music ended with a twang.

"We are old friends now," said the jockey as he picked the strings musingly. "Colonel, I think I can work her six furlongs in 1:20. That ought to be easy for her."

"Just a romp. You can let her down the last furlong if you think best. Use your own judgment."

They saddled her, and he got in the saddle. "She'll go right," he predicted. None would have thought him a man of fifty, so easy, light and graceful was his seat. Mimosa struck an easy canter and soon broke. That she was under restraint the Colonel knew, and he waited for the last furlong with interest. He was sure Mimosa had her speed. When she came back she was neither tired nor nervous.

"She is all right now," Graydon said as he picked up his banjo. "I'll come and see her as often as I can. She is a great filly, Colonel. I'll own up, I am interested in her."

Graydon came often. He rode Mimosa in her morning canter and in the afternoons played in front of her stable. With satisfaction Col. Moore saw she waited expectantly for these visits. Still she was very shy of strangers. Then came the trial, and she did all that was asked of her. The Columbia would have a field of eight, perhaps ten; and the general comment was: "Nothing in it but Tyrant." Col. Moore did not under-rate his opponent. Graydon predicted a hard race. "After the first furlong there will be nothing in it but Tyrant and Mimosa. The colt always goes to the front, and he'll carry her along with him. I know she will stay. In my time I rode Ceylon and Sensitive. Each

would go distance and pack weight. If she behaves properly it will be a race from flagfall to the wire."

"What I most fear is Morrell," said the Colonel. "He will ride War Paint, and his whip may annoy her."

"War Paint will not get near her. Mark my words, Colonel, Morrell will be a bad last."

Morrell was busy with his plans. To his surprise horsemen gave him no sympathy when it was announced that Graydon, not he, would ride Mimosa. Morrell knew War Paint was sluggish and would stand punishment. That Tyrant would win he believed, but should the filly beat him she would be hailed as the greatest two-year-old in a decade. He wanted to bring his colt near her, and if successful he could use the whip and ruin her chances.

There was little difference in the trials of Tyrant and Mimosa. That of the colt was a shade faster, but Col. Moore and Mr. Graydon agreed she had more in reserve at the end than he. Then she carried full weight and he had at least ten pounds off. However, the tipsters rated her as an outsider.

In the paddock on the day of the race Tyrant was admired by all, and none but experts gave Mimosa a passing glance. And Tyrant merited this admiration. He was a tall, big bay, fearless and sweet-tempered, "a colt without a fault," his trainer often said. Mimosa showed little sensitiveness, less than she had shown in the West. Graydon stood with Col. Moore and watched her keenly. Her position was in front of Tyrant. The line stopped for a minute, and Tyrant, despite the efforts of his attendant, walked to her side. She turned her head and their noses met. Then the colt took his place behind her and the line moved on. Both her jockey and owner were interested. The former believed Tyrant knew she was to be his only opponent.

"Looks as if Tyrant is in love with your filly, Colonel," said a cheerful voice, and Col. Moore knew it was Tom Lavin, Tyrant's trainer.

"They are surely friendly," admitted

the Colonel. "You have a great colt, Tom, a great colt."

"The greatest two-year-old of all time."

"Wait until after the race, Tom; it is too soon to say that."

"You don't think you can beat me, Colonel?"

"I surely do. I think mighty well of her, mighty well. Tom, we'll see the horse race of a lifetime."

The call to saddle-up came. Graydon was astonished at Mimosa. Her eyes looked courage and she was eager to race. Col. Moore could not understand the great change in her behavior. "You must ask Tyrant," Graydon said as he swung into the saddle.

"No true horseman sends a colt he has bred to the post in a stake event without backing him," Col. Moore said to a spectator. "Such action is an insult to good judgment and good breeding. Permit me to say, sir, no Kentucky gentleman bets against his own horse." Mimosa was not entirely neglected.

At the post Mimosa was bravely confident. Network, remarkably well behaved, had the inside; then came Mimosa, Tyrant and War Paint. Morrell had an idea that to delay the start would be to his advantage, but the starter soon understood his intention. "None of that, Morrell," he warned, in a clear, distinct voice. "Try it again and I'll send them off without you."

The field was moving. Rapidly the starter ran his eye over horses and riders, saw each was in place and shouted eagerly: "Come on! Come on!" A rush like the surge of a great wave, a shifting mass of many colors as if the riders in their jackets were floating on its crest, a clatter of hoofs like the long roll of a morning drum, again the swift, careful, experienced glance, a satisfied look on the brown face, and the flag cut the air. From his little stand he watched them move up the long backstretch and with a gratified smile stepped to the ground; the start was perfect.

For nearly a furlong the line was unbroken, for with the exception of Gray-

don, the jockeys were waiting for Tyrant to assume the lead and make their struggle for place. Morrell's plan was to follow at Tyrant's heels, shift his whip to the left hand the instant he was beside Mimosa, believing the punishment War Paint was to receive would make her unmanagable. But Tom Hare, a jockey of ability, had decided to wait until certain Tyrant was in his stride before going to the front, a policy to Mimosa's liking, for she was not a quick breaker. No sooner did Tyrant make his move than she followed, and in an instant there was an open length between them and the field. Morrell turned War Paint in behind, intending to place him beside the filly, only to see her in front measuring strides with Tyrant. In anger he savagely struck his mount with the whip, causing him to swerve, narrowly escaping a collision with Network. When Morrell had War Paint straight he was last, hopelessly beaten, for the field had closed in front of him.

No sooner had the two assumed the lead than the pace increased. Tyrant carrying the filly with him, though both were under restraint, for there was a good five furlongs yet to run. Graydon sat perfectly still, for he knew Tyrant was pacemaker and that the filly was making no attempt to outfoot him. The telegraphic pressure on the reins told him Mimosa believed herself able to win. They were drawing away from the field, not in a spectacular rush but a steady, even gain in every stride. The veteran had decided on his course. Tyrant was a great stretch runner and delighted in making the end fast and furious, but if he kept up the pace he would have little in reserve for a finish. Hare would not dare to check the pace, for in a two-horse race neither could afford to give or take liberties. Graydon knew he had one great advantage; Tyrant was pacemaker, and in the end this would tell against him. All the veteran could do, for the present at least, was to sit still and let the filly run his race. The hoofbeats of those behind grew fainter. They were making the far turn when Hare spoke:

"The others are out of it, Graydon."

The veteran's comment was brief: "This race is between us."

There was challenge in the words and voice; Tom Hare felt Tyrant was to be tried as he had never been tried before. For the first time he thought of the possibility of defeat.

Then came the long, straight last quarter. Though Tyrant lengthened his stride Mimosa never faltered. Hare's face became grave. Tyrant would soon make his run, and if she clung to him as she had done, it would be a death struggle to the wire. They reached the homestretch, and Tyrant, lifting proudly his head, bounded forward, but like a shadow she clung, measuring stride for stride. Hare glanced at Graydon. His opponent was sitting still, as still as an exercise boy, though Hare was now lifting Tyrant at every stride.

In the grandstand there was silence; the conflict was too desperate, too long and trying to call for yells and encouraging cries. Could it be that Tyrant, the invincible, was to meet defeat? Hare was calling on him for his best efforts while Graydon was not making a move. Mimosa had her friends. Bitterly the witless thought: "Graydon is too old to ride. If he could only assist her she would win; but the experts, many of them Tyrant's friends, held their breath.

Out in the field Col. Moore, watching Mimosa's efforts, saw courage in her eyes, resolute determination in her stride. Hare's face was drawn and hard, and though Graydon had not moved, his eyes glinted and his lips pinched. Then Hare's white whip glistened in the sunlight, hissing and writhing as it cut the air, and for the first time in his racing life Tyrant felt the lash. Twice it fell with cruel, brutal force, and the colt made his final effort. Graydon awoke from his seeming trance. His head lowered, his fine hands tightened on the reins as he kept the tiring Mimosa straight, held her together and lifted her for the decisive struggle. Col. Moore's heart beat with great throbs when he saw her desperate determination. Robert Graydon was young again, displaying all that vigor, fire and judgment which in former years had made him famous, riding with matchless skill the most potent of all finishes—the hand ride—the finish stronger, grander and more masterful than that which depends on whip and spur for strength and force. Bravely, nobly, grandly, Mimosa responded to his masterful endeavors. Her shortening stride lengthened; she caught the spirit of the rider, and was inspired with new courage as she was lifted on, on and on to the long, last, desperate, heartbreaking effort. Tyrant was beaten by a head.



MRS. BRONX—Didn't her constant singing in the flat annoy you?
MRS. HARLEM—Not so much as the constant flat in her singing.



MOST of the idols before the marriage altar have clay feet.

THE GRAND TEMPERAMENT

By Gustav Kobbé

HE was one of the greatest portrait painters, American but living abroad and over here only on one of his infrequent visits. He was in my studio; other painters had dropped in to see him, and the talk naturally had drifted from other topics to his work.

"Maruja?" he said, repeating a question one of us had asked. "No, I haven't kept track of her. Perhaps I should have. It was the Luxembourg's purchase of my portrait of her that laid the foundation of whatever reputation I may have. But—" He broke off and looked gravely around the circle.

"Of course," he resumed at last, as if moved by a sudden impulse, "some of you remember her. Maruja, Spanish dancer—black hair, burning eyes, sinuous grace of motion—every step, every gesture, even every pose subtly adjusted to rhythm—the incarnation of the wavy line in music. They used to tell a story in Boston—where my people come from—of Emerson and Charles Eliot Norton at one of Fanny Ellsler's performances. 'Ralph,' whispered Norton, 'this is art.' 'Charles,' returned the Concord philosopher, 'it is religion!'

"Art the dancing of Maruja surely was. Religion it as surely was not. Rather it was magic—music, with all its strange potentialities, liquefied into action. This woman trod mysterious measures, 'overtones' of motion, no one else had dreamed of, making rhythm visible, giving it form and color, transmuting it into all things man had ever yearned for or desired. Such dancing! The height of abandon, the depth of quiescence, with uncanny hints of unrest still vexing the surface—a mere ripple of the body, a slight swaying from the

waist up, a narrow line of white gleaming from behind slightly parted lips, the poise of a cobra ready to strike!

"Tensely you waited for the forward thrust, to learn into the heart of what man the fangs would sink; also you believed everything you had ever heard of her—not only of her beauty and her wonderful art, but of the ruin she had always left in her track. The story of the young French sculptor who had suddenly leaped into fame by modeling a stunning portrait relief of her—and poisoned himself soon after; of the Spanish poet who had dedicated his finest sonnet to her—and ended in a madhouse; of the Russian diplomat who had squandered a fortune on her—and blown his brains out—these were just samples. There were many others. But those of us who understood the 'grand temperament' also understood her. She was no mere dancer. She was one of those great artists, to whom love was but a means of shedding and renewing emotional tissue; a thing to be flashlited a thousand times, yielding each time a new image on the plate; an adventure, passionately entered upon, yet coolly scanned as regards development and outcome; a succession of experiences from which she enriched the technical resources of her one great passion, that to which she dedicated everything and everyone—her art. The 'grand temperament' feeds on love and picks the bones clean. Its victims, like the suicides at Monte Carlo, are but vaguely missed. Their exit is subdued, deadened. They go to the scrap heap with the rest of the discarded machinery of the world. Often the 'grand temperament' finds strange lodgment and is discovered

where least expected. It chanced that this time it had elected to manifest itself in the person of a woman who danced.

"All these things *he* should have understood—would have understood, if he hadn't been so handsome and so accustomed to having women fall in love with him. Almost every other person, man or woman, said he reminded them of a young Greek god—though none of them had ever seen one. But what they meant was that he had the form and features a great sculptor would have rejoiced to model; that he was an Apollo, recreated for their unconsciously half-pagan world to worship all over again; and that he took its adulation as his prerogative. People who ought to know say the Greeks painted their statues. But they would have had difficulty in reproducing the sheen of his fair, wavy hair, the deep storm blue of his eyes, the clear pink of his complexion and the general sparkle and animation of his manner. I tried a portrait of him and gave it up—the only thing I ever gave up. It was wonderful how the tide always set toward him. You could feel the stir when he entered a room, and the movement of eyes, talk and interest in his direction. And yet he didn't understand that, often as he had played with fire, she might be the once too often; that skillfully as he had hitherto managed to steer clear of treacherous reefs, the coast of her Bohemia was strewn with wreckage.

"Into all his other 'affairs' he had gone with his eyes open, like the leading man in a play; and when it was all over and the curtain rung down, there he was ready to be cast for the lover in the next comedy, with another heroine eagerly waiting to go on. But this Spanish dancer was a heroine of a different type. She bided her time and made her choice. I recall the first night she saw him. She had been here a month without finding anyone she loved well enough to destroy. Suddenly, as I watched her, the smoldering fire in her eyes flashed into clear flame. Whatever part of the stage the dance carried her to, the flash was always in the same direction. I followed

it, and at the end of it sat he, his blue eyes shining back with the light they caught from hers.

"You must know that if there is a task more ungrateful than trying to save a man from himself, it is trying to save him from a woman. I discovered that when I tried to warn the man in this case. I reminded him of the ruin she had wrought. I even confirmed some of the stories that were current about her. For she had filled engagements in Paris, when I was *maissier* in Carotin's studio, and later on she appeared in Madrid, when I was copying Velasquez portraits in the Prado. But he had a ready answer to everything I said: She really hadn't loved any of these men—only thought she had. It was different with him. He had touched the deepest chord in her nature. She had told him so herself.

"'The deepest chord in her nature!'
It is useless to argue against that ancient fallacy. When I tried to, he lost his temper, accused me of being jealous of him, because I'd painted her portrait without her falling in love with me. Of course it would have been a vain effort for me to have attempted to explain to him my theory of portraiture—that the artist should hold himself wholly detached from his sitter, regard her in a purely objective, analytical way, although he may employ a technique that is most personal and subjective in putting what he sees on canvas; that I sling my paint as I want to, but see my sitter as she is and for what she is; and that thus I had seen Maruja.

"But he was too good—of his kind—to let go by the board without further effort. If only as a unique specimen of the genus homo from an artist's point of view, he was worth it, and he was a nice sociable chap besides. I also must own to a slightly selfish motive. His portrait had baffled me and I wanted to try my hand at it again. So I went to see the woman. From the way she spoke you'd have thought her passion for him so intense as to be lasting. But when I asked her if she had any idea of marrying him, she emitted three pretty rings of cigarette smoke and watched them float

away as if she were lost in studying their airy grace.

"The rest is quickly told. He followed her to Paris, and in due time there was a brief cable in the papers saying he had shot himself at the door of her apartment in the Rue de Prony. I was over there some months later and asked her about it.

"Ah, yes," she sighed. "It was too bad. But he kept coming to the apartment and making scenes. The Count—Oh, I forgot you never heard of the Count! Is he with me now? No. Poor fellow, he was found in the Seine a few weeks ago. Well, the Count—you see, he paid for the apartment, and, as he objected to the scenes, which were rather trying, I had to tell your friend that he mustn't come here any more. When he found out next day that I meant it and that he couldn't get in, he shot a hole in his head right on the stair landing and made a horrid spot on a handsome new rug in front of the door. It had to be thrown away."

"Once more she emitted three pretty rings of cigarette smoke—which was one of her minor accomplishments—and watched them float away and melt into space. Then to me: 'I had hoped, my friend, that you had come over here to ask me to pose for you again.'

"You see, the Luxembourg had meanwhile acquired the portrait, and I suppose she felt flattered by a new kind of vogue this had given her. Fortunately—perhaps—I had others to paint. Moreover"—and this he said with a bitterness I never had heard in his voice before—"there was a beautiful new rug at the door of her apartment with her initials exquisitely woven in a center medallion, and it would have been a pity to spoil it."

When the gathering broke up one of the younger men, who had come back from Paris later than most of us, stayed behind with me. A certain restlessness on his part had struck me during the telling of the portrait painter's story. Even now he walked about the room as if to look at the pictures, though he barely glanced at them.

At last he said: "They were still talking about her in the studios when I was over there. She was in love—desperately in love—with one man; and they say he never even knew that she cared for him. In the end it broke her up and she disappeared from the stage."

"And who was the man?"

"The great artist who painted the portrait of her that hangs in the Luxembourg."



FOWL LANGUAGE

By J. W. Babcock

COURTING, she called him "Ducky";
Wedded, he was a goose.
But now he's chicken-hearted
And henpecked, so what's the use?



THE aviator's fears are not always groundless.

HIS RUINED LIFE

By Terrell Love Holliday

A LONELY bach'lor sadly said:
"Believe me, boys, I'd *like* to wed.
I've hunted high and hunted low,
Through Frisco, York and Kokomo,
But nowhere can I find—in life—
The dream girl I would make my wife.
My lass has milk white teeth that gleam
Like those in 'ads.' for dental cream.
Her queenly height appears replete
With flowing lines from head to feet.
Though slender, yet she needs no pads—
Her figure's like the corset 'ads.'
Her tresses sweep luxuriantly
Some inches down below her knee,
And they would make as thick a braid
As has the girl who booms 'Hairaid.'
Her clothes are swell beyond compare.
She wears them, too, with such an air!
She's perfect, quite, from hat to boots—
As in the 'ads.' for Ladies' Suits.

"And that's my ideal," said Old Bach,
"Impossible in flesh to match.
They ruined my life—that's what it means—
Those 'ad.' girls in the magazines."



"LIFE is full of trials," mused the pessimist.
"I don't care," said the optimist, "so long as I am acquitted."



I F we always thought before acting, there would be fewer on the stage.

Persons mutilation of printed books, magazines furniture or walls with
be prosecuted to the extent of the law

THAT INSUFFERABLE PERSON

By Jane Cowl

IT was warm, sunny and midday. The long lines of the *Sayonara* as she lay at anchor were reflected in water that was as blue and sparkling as another Mediterranean, and the atmosphere was of that brightness and clarity that one sees only on June mornings. The yacht was in full sailing trim, and ready to start as soon as the party was complete and the luggage of the guests taken on board.

Miss Gerry sat in the stern and shaded her eyes with a white lace sunshade. She had not quite made up her mind whether she was going to enjoy this Norwegian cruise or not. She was finding it more and more difficult to enjoy things as the seasons went by. It was Mrs. Richard Cleeves's yachting party, and so far it looked as if she had got together only the same old tiresome set. Margaret Gerry wondered if there was not going to be at least one fresh face, someone in the nature of an invasion, some interesting somebody to make the cruise more bearable. So far as she could see, every man on board except one—he was married, and sixty—had at one time or other been an acknowledged suitor for her hand. She was heartily bored, and groaned inwardly and longed for a desert island where she might dwell quietly by herself and wear linsey-woolsey down to dinner if she pleased.

She picked up the magazine which lay in her lap and began cutting the leaves. It was the same old periodical, with the same old pictures and the same old stories. She threw it down in desperation.

"Margaret dear, have you gone to sleep? Aren't you going to watch the start? The Burtons' yacht is moving

off over there and they're waving flags. I can see Reggie Van Ness standing in the stern with a pair of field glasses leveled on you—wave to him, do, or he'll throw himself overboard."

It was Mrs. Dick Cleeves. Margaret looked up and smiled a languid smile. "Perhaps it would cool his ardor," she said. "Let him jump if he wants to. I really don't care."

"Don't be hard-hearted. And for goodness sake don't look so bored. I know you can't help it, but it's *not* complimentary to my party, and I do so want things to succeed. I'm not responsible, you know, if you've had proposals from every man in New York, Paris, London and Nice. I can't create a new social world for you to conquer, Margaret dear, and I'm not sure I think you ought to be encouraged to acquire any more beaux, anyway."

Margaret laughed.

"Jinny dear, I'm not out of sorts with you, nor with your party, as your party. You know I find it the most alluring invitation I've received or I shouldn't be here. But this very life of ours is so boring! Please *do* understand. You can't help it any more than I can—it's the whole scheme. I know just what it's going to be like beforehand—that's what I hate. There'll be the same old crowd on deck at night—the same old singing, the same old strumming of guitars, the same old expensive novelties to eat at table. I'd give a good round sum to have something happen—to meet somebody who would dare to be different, somebody to break the sameness and put an end to this everlasting *ennui*."

Mrs. Cleeves gave a little exclamation.

"Somebody who would dare to be dif-

ferent! My dear Margaret, you know you wouldn't like that! In spite of your words, you're the most unalterably conventional woman I know."

Margaret nodded. "Oh, yes, I'm that. I have to be. From a girl, the moment I tried to do an unconventional thing I was pounced upon by some beast of a man who imagined I was encouraging him. It was impossible to be anything but conventional."

Mrs. Cleaves laughed. "Well, I can offer you a bit of solace," she said. "There's a man on board whom you haven't met, and whom I want you to know."

Margaret's eyes opened wide and she sat up. "Really?" she said. "A stranger?"

"A stranger, indeed—been in Japan nearly all his adult life. He has the most fascinating home near Tokio, with miles of gardens. Some business has brought him to this country, and Dick would have him come to us. Dick adores him—they were at college together. But I don't mind telling you I think he's rather splendid myself. We spent six months on his Japanese place once. I had a beautiful time."

When Hayden was introduced, Margaret braced herself in an unconscious way she had. It was her way of discouraging any hopes they might be inclined to raise. Men were usually staggered and speechless on their first sight of her. But Hayden did not seem to be unduly impressed; Margaret was conscious of a strange feeling of resentment.

Hayden looked at the deck chair beside Margaret. She smiled and patted it encouragingly.

He seated himself, and without any by-your-leave took her sunshade out of her hand and held it where it would best shield her and yet not exclude the breeze. She sank back and eyed him covertly; his eyes were turned a little away and he was making some idle comment about the activities around them.

"I've promised myself for years that I'd come on one of these cruises, but it's always been impossible till now. It's

my first pleasure voyage in fifteen years."

"Really?" Miss Gerry was unusually curious. The strength of Hayden's profile was interesting her.

There was a little silence.

"No, my nose isn't just straight, and that scar comes from falling downstairs, not duelling," he remarked presently in a quiet tone.

Margaret took her sunshade from him and closed it.

"You're—frank, aren't you?" she said, in a chilling tone.

"Perhaps. You were staring horribly, you know. I'm not sure but that staring's rude."

Margaret was speechless for a moment.

"You seem to have your own idea of the proprieties," she said finally, with a trifle of sarcasm. "That should be very convenient."

"Oh, it is—and it isn't. I might perhaps take more stock in the conventions if I could be persuaded that they are useful or make anybody any happier."

"Here are we two. We're not ordinary, and we've both reached years of discretion. To be exact, I'm thirty-five; and you're—oh, you're a good twenty-seven or eight." Margaret bit her lip, but he went on, blandly unconscious. "So why should we cavil and beat about the bush and be hypocritical? I for one don't mean to. Do you?"

She had swallowed her flash of anger and was uncomfortably aware that she was becoming a little interested.

"Tell me," she said, with a lovely smile, "what are you hoping to get out of life?"

His eyes sparkled. "Oh—everything. All the happiness and fun and genuine contentment I can crowd into my four-score and ten."

"Oh, you're joking. Surely a man of thirty-five must have learned how little of real enjoyment there is in living."

Hayden laughed. "This man hasn't! And he doesn't intend that any such hot-house views shall enter into his scheme of existence. It's all nonsense your talking the way you do. You don't believe it a little bit. You've been out

seven years or so, and been sated with admiration and enough unholy flattery to pervert a saint, and all this has warped your judgment and distorted your perspective. But way down in the bottom of your heart you're not like that. You know that if you could put on gunnysack and go barefoot without fear of some Mrs. Van Uppermost leveling a jewelled lorgnette at you, you'd come and make mudpies with me with all the strength you've got. Now, honestly, wouldn't you?"

Miss Gerry smiled and rose.

"You're very interesting, Mr. Hayden," she said, "but I must tear myself away. To emulate your own frankness, I don't think I care for your Utopian mudpie scheme of life, and I don't imagine we should have very many tastes in common."

"Not a bit of it—we shall pull together beautifully," said Hayden, as she moved away.

"Beast!" she ejaculated, and went over to talk with Ashton Phelps.

Ashton Phelps was a writer of books which never had any sale, who supported his somewhat expensive tastes on the uncertain fluctuations of the stock market. He seemed so far to have always found it profitable, but there were those who shook their heads and said unpleasant sounding things. But Phelps was entertaining and "smart" and his books had a certain vogue in his own set. He had once proposed to Miss Gerry and she had summarily refused him; and when he asked her, in amazed surprise, for her reason, she picked up his latest book and said with more of feeling than was usual in her tone:

"Any man who could put such stuff as this on paper and leave it lying round where decent men and women may read it isn't fit to be at large. Since you are here and people tolerate you, I shall probably have to meet you and be nice to you, but thank God, I'm not obliged to marry you."

And Phelps had taken her hand and said very humbly and seriously: "You're a sweet girl and I respect you, and you're quite right. I'm a bad lot and I know it, and I'm sorry I spoke. I

won't swear I'll do better, for I'd probably break my oath, but it may interest you to know that I'll try." And from that time on they had been on very good terms.

Phelps had just given her the latest stock quotations when he caught sight of Hayden sitting smiling to himself in the stern.

"Hello!" he ejaculated suddenly. "Isn't that Hayden?"

Miss Gerry lifted her eyebrows. "It is," she said shortly.

Phelps laughed. "What's up?" he asked.

"Oh, nothing; he's simply the most insufferable man I've ever met. I can't think where he was brought up."

Phelps grinned. "As a matter of fact, though, you know," he said, "he's an immensely fine sort of person. I don't think I ever knew anybody who is more sincerely admired. I know many a man who will swear by Hayden. Our host, for instance, is as enthusiastic as a press agent."

Miss Gerry shuddered becomingly and started to move away, when a hurried patter of footsteps along the deck arrested her attention and she turned in time to be caught in a warm embrace by a slim girl of about twenty.

"Why, Betty Sydnor! I didn't know you were on board!" Margaret's face was full of a sweet and genuine affection.

"I came very near *not* being. Our launch broke down halfway up the river, and father tinkered with it till he was all over oil—I think it has effectually cured him of a pet belief that any man who knows a motor car can run a launch—and I only just got on board. Don't you think it's going to be a splendid cruise? Such a lot of interesting people; don't you think so?"

Margaret frowned a little. "Well, so far," she said, "I've not been overpoweringly struck with anybody."

Then Betty caught sight of Ashton Phelps, who stood unexpectedly, hat in hand.

"How do you do, Mr. Phelps?" she cried, and smiled and flushed with pleasure. "I haven't seen you since Saratoga. How is the book coming on?"

Margaret's brows met in annoyance. "Surely, Ashton Phelps, you haven't been—"

He gave her a quick appealing glance, and there was something in his eyes that made her pause.

Betty Sydnor beamed up in his face. "She doesn't know about it, does she?" she asked, coloring. "You see, Margaret, I told Mr. Phelps that I didn't think his books were—as wholesome as they might be—and he agreed with me; and now he's writing a pretty little idyl about a dear, quiet Berkshire village where we met last summer, and he's putting me in as the heroine." She looked away shyly. "I'm very proud."

Margaret looked steadily at Phelps, who tried to meet her eyes. "You may well be proud," she said seriously. "Oh, Phelps, you'd never have done so much for me!"

Suddenly Betty gave a little cry. "Why, Mr. Hayden, dear Mr. Hayden!" she called, and ran toward him frankly.

He turned and met her, and they clasped hands and were so palpably glad to see each other that Margaret felt more annoyed and more uncomfortably snubbed than ever.

"How in the world does that child know him?" she asked of Phelps.

"Her father was consul at Nagasaki some years ago and she kept house for him. She must have met Hayden then. There's something wrong with your perspective, Margaret; you see, *she* likes him."

"Well, let me tell you, my perspective on things suits *me*!" She rapped her parasol sharply on the deck and turned away, when she came face to face with Hayden, who was being dragged along by Betty.

"Margaret dear, I want you to meet one of my very *best* friends, Mr. Hayden, whom I used to know—"

"It isn't a bit of use your doing all that, Miss Sydnor," Hayden broke in. "Miss Gerry and I have got to be very good friends already. We had a short but engrossing conversation soon after I came on board, and found out that we hold the same views on life exactly. I mean to know her better, though, before

the voyage is over. And we've an engagement to make mudpies together when we get to Norway." His eyes twinkled into Margaret's. She was speechless.

Margaret drew herself up coldly. "It's time to dress for luncheon," she said. And with a little careless nod she moved toward the companionway.

Hayden was after her to hand her down before she could reach the top step. As he gave her his hand he leaned over and whispered in her ear:

"A friendly suggestion—you use too much powder on your nose. It's unnatural. Please rub some of it off before luncheon."

She gave an exclamation, jerked her hand away and disappeared down the steps. She reached her stateroom in an attitude of mind anything but amiable. "Insufferable cad!" she exclaimed as she flung her hat to her maid.

Suddenly she turned the little English woman round by her shoulders and gave her a good-humored shake.

"Look at me, Josephine. Tell me—do I use too much powder on my nose?"

"Why, no, Miss Margaret—that is, not as a rule."

"Not as a rule?" She took a quick glance into her mirror. "That means that today, then—"

"You 'ave got a little more on than usual today, miss—not that I would say too much."

Margaret frowned. "Well, I wouldn't be pretty if I were all red and funny, would I?"

When she entered the dining room she found the rest of the party already assembled. Mrs. Cleaves stared at her face for some seconds, and then, leaning toward her, said in a stage whisper:

"Margaret dear, take some of the powder off your nose. It's coated."

Margaret laid down her spoon. She inwardly prayed that Hayden had not heard. But he had, for there was a perceptible twitching round his lips as he nodded to her over his glass of water.

"I know it," she replied. "I like it that way."

Presently, when she felt it was safe, her eyes furtively sought out Hayden's

face. His lips were puckered up in an attempt to keep from laughing, and his eyes were fixed on her nose.

She choked on her *bouillon* and left the table precipitately. She stood, flushed and coughing, in the passage outside, and waved away two glasses of water frantically offered to her by two distressed swains, when she felt both her arms being raised above her head and a calm voice saying:

"There—that will stop it. Always when you choke, put both hands over your head. It acts like magic."

She thanked him reluctantly and looked up, her eyes full of tears, choking with rage.

"Mr. Hayden—"

"Miss Gerry?"

"As a man of the world—"

"I'm not a man of the world—at least, not your world. I told you that this morning."

"Well, would you mind telling me how you prefer to be classified?"

"Certainly—as a good pal, a near and dear friend."

"You mean—"

"Of yours, to be sure."

"Aren't you presuming a good deal on—"

He was looking at her nose. "It does look bad," he smiled.

She stamped her foot. "I don't want you to speak to me like that!"

He took his handkerchief from his pocket and offered it to her with a little confidential *moue*. She turned and fled.

It was after dinner that night when she next appeared. As she reached the deck she found it deserted except for two or three small groups. Hayden was pacing up and down smoking. Sounds of music floating up from below indicated where most of the guests were amusing themselves.

As Hayden caught sight of Miss Gerry he turned and walked slowly by her side.

"Did I frighten you away from dinner?" he asked.

"Not at all."

"You ate practically nothing for luncheon. Have you had anything at all since breakfast?"

"I felt no inclination to dine."

"Then you *haven't* eaten since breakfast?"

"No," she answered coldly.

"Oh, well—" He smiled. "No wonder you harbor unpleasant thoughts against—people. Fasting that length of time is enough to make you turn against the Angel Gabriel. I'll get you something to eat." He started away.

"Just a moment, Mr. Hayden, please. Do you consider your attitude toward me since we met has been a—usual—one?"

"God forbid!"

"What do you mean by that?"

"Just what I say, Miss Gerry. I'm not in sympathy with the modern man's stock of small talk and his oppressive mannerism, that's all."

"Mr. Hayden, if you have adopted this Shavian pose because you think it's original or brilliant, allow me to remind you that it's been done before—and very much better, I have no doubt."

Hayden laughed. "Dear me! You need food more badly than I thought."

Miss Gerry made a little annoyed exclamation. "I understand that you're not outside the pale, Mr. Hayden," she replied sharply, "but there are breaches of good breeding which tacitly amount to crimes in the eyes of our world."

"And these crimes against good breeding—I've committed these?" They had stopped beside the rail.

"I consider that you—yes, most decidedly."

He paused a moment. "Does it occur to you that you are making rather a serious criticism of Mrs. Cleaves's choice of a guest? She gave me a most cordial invitation. She likes me." He looked straight into her eyes.

"That doesn't give you the right to talk to me as you please."

"Well, let's settle this, and then I'll get you something to eat and your animosity will dissolve."

"I haven't the least desire for food, so please don't trouble."

"It's no trouble, and you need it badly. It's hunger that makes you so grumpy. To return to our muttons—"

She stamped her foot. "Mr. Hayden! I quite appreciate that you are Mrs.

Cleeves's guest as well as I, but I cannot see any good reason why you should give yourself the right to be so consistently and persistently rude to me!" Her eyes were blazing.

He bit his lips. "Am I so rude?"

"Unwarrantably."

"Why? All because I've spoken the truth to you where another man, who fancied he had something to gain by it, would have flattered you! You were angry this morning because I told you you were staring at me, which was true. Then I told you you looked your age and that your conventionality was nonsense—all true, but you resented it! And then when I said what I know to be a fact, that most women who have lived the awful round of fashionable gowning would love to go about in sacking and get healthily dirty for once, you consider I overstep the bounds. Then, because I try to make you see that a woman who is as beautiful as you are needs no artifices to help her to look well, and that the amount of powder you had on your face disfigures instead of rendering you more attractive, your vanity rebels against it and you promptly hate me, and expect me to wither away under your displeasure."

"I—I wish—"

"Just a moment; it's rude to interrupt. Now to speak plainly: As these things go, I am of more than ordinarily good family; I've been brought up quite as well as yourself, and I am probably a trifle better educated—I've been through an academy and two colleges. I am obedient to the laws; I believe in a God, and I do my best to keep the Ten Commandments. Although I am fairly well off, I do a day's work every day, except during my yearly holiday; and I have never felt myself so superior that I saw fit to take offense at a fellow being's criticism of me. I believe that women were made to do things, to use their brains and hands the same as men; and I see no reason why any woman who does nothing for her neighbor or for herself should be set upon a pedestal and treated as an *objet de vertu*. Now you were made for something better. I'm capable of being a real friend to you, and

I will be if you want me to, but not until you get over your silly habit of expecting me to address you in epic poetry and to hand you compliments on a silver salver. I *had* intended to tell you many more things that are good for you, and to try to help you to climb out of this morass of conventionality, but I'm not sure now that you've got it in you to reform. At any rate, if you want any further help from me I think you should say you are sorry for the way you've acted. I'll send you a bite to eat by your maid. Good night." And he disappeared.

Miss Gerry gripped the rail before her and stood silent, rigid, her face pale with anger and bewilderment. She never knew what she said to Josephine when the poor little woman approached with a tray of tempting things, but she frightened her away quite effectually.

She moved rapidly to the companion-way and sped along to Mrs. Cleeves's door. Mrs. Cleeves was writing.

"My dear Margaret," she said in astonishment, "whatever is the matter?"

"Everything is the matter! *He's* the matter!"

"He? Who?"

"Your Mr. Hayden—your paragon. Excuse me, Jinny, but I've got to say my say or I'll scream. He's insufferable! He's talked to me as I've never been talked to in my life. He's said things—he's said things—" She made a little gesture of despair. "Oh, Jinny, you don't know the volumes of rudeness he's poured forth at me in the short time we've been on this yacht. I cannot think how you and Dick can tolerate such a boor of a man!"

"Dear heart, what has he said?"

Margaret told her, rapidly and with rising anger, all that had gone on between her and Hayden, and Mrs. Cleeves struggled with a tendency to laugh, and succeeded in looking fairly sympathetic.

"I'm sorry, my dear," she said at last, "but I'm in the awkward position. I can't very well speak to him about it and say, 'Thou shalt not speak thy mind,' can I? After all, he's my guest, too, and Dick's best friend. And I can't cut him—at least, not until we get to dry land. What can I do?"

Really, dear, don't you think perhaps you imagined— No? Well, perhaps not. I can understand that it would be quite like Hayden suddenly to take a notion to rail against his pet aversion—the polite conventions. We're used to it, but I suppose I should have warned you. He's always been candid, fearfully; and he hates frills, and never does things in the old cut and dried ways. But I've always found that rather a relief than otherwise. And with your constant kicking against monotony and sameness, I should have imagined he would be more or less amusing to you. That's what I counted on, rather.

"I'm downright sorry you don't like him. He talked a lot about you—had wanted to meet you for a long time, he told me. I'm disappointed, because Hayden is the finest man, bar none, that ever breathed. I love Dick, but I know Hayden is finer. He's only thirty-five, but, Margaret, my dear, the things he's done with his life—the things he's achieved and the good he's done! Oh, I don't mean the gold-medal-for-bravery kind of thing—he's not like that—but the kind of thing that means betterment for the people he lives among, a helping hand here, encouragement there—never in ostentatious giving, but in real hard work and the spending of labor and energy. However, if you don't like him, I dare say it's no use my talking. I'm sorry it all had to happen."

Margaret shook her head and rose to go. "I'm sorry I made a fuss. It isn't your fault, of course. But if you could contrive to keep him more or less under your wing, out of my way, I'd be endlessly obliged. And I'll do my best to try and consider him as simply queer, not offensive. Good night." She bent and kissed Mrs. Cleeves. Her face was pale with weariness. As she passed the mirror, she laughed.

"It doesn't do for me to lose my temper," she said; "it makes me look old and ugly."

"Nonsense, my dear. You're beauty incarnate. But, Margaret, where, oh where, has your sense of humor gone?"

In the morning the weather was blus-

try and the yacht was pitching. Margaret had her breakfast in her berth. She looked at the envelope the maid brought her. The writing was clear, strong, masterful. She flushed, cut the flap and read:

MY DEAR MISS GERRY:

I hope you are in a better humor this morning. Because, if you are not, I am not sure that a proposition I have to make will meet with your favor. Will you marry me? I am taking it for granted that you have thought over what I said last night. I mean to save your best from your worst self, if I can. Of course you understand that I am in love with you. Mrs. Cleeves will give you any information about me you may desire to have before deciding. I have no objection to waiting as much longer as you think you will require to know me better, but I am willing to take you as you are, and trust to your being what I think you. I shall be waiting for you on the deck. If you mean to refuse me, please tell me so as briefly as possible; I naturally do not want to suffer any more than is absolutely necessary.

Always very truly yours,

JAMES R. HAYDEN.

Margaret allowed the letter to slip from her hands.

"Upon my word," she said, "the man's a monstrosity! He's unique—in my experience, at least. But I'll fix him! I'll give him enough unconventionalality to last him a while! Now that I understand your tactics, my friend, I think I'm equal to this proposal."

While she was dressing she despatched her maid to Mrs. Cleeves with a line reading: "My sense of humor is on its legs again. Read this"—and enclosed Hayden's letter.

She received a most disconcerting reply: "Oh, Margaret, take care. Your fate is settled. You may as well make up your mind to it."

"We'll see!" she cried.

A half-hour later she appeared on deck, fresh, radiant, unconcerned. With a rug, a book and a field glass, she took up her position in a comfortable deck-chair and awaited results. She could see Hayden out of the corner of her eye. Immaculate in flannels, he lounged not far distant. She was a trifle nonplused at his untroubled mien. She opened her book and began to read. A few seconds passed; then she heard a cheery voice beside her calling, "Good morning."

She looked up with a studied smile of indifference.

"Oh, good morning, Mr. Hayden." She resumed her book. A moment later the book was gently taken from her hands and cast aside, and Hayden seated himself beside her.

"It's manners, even from your point of view, to answer a civil question. What are you going to say in reply to my note?" He was smiling good-humoredly.

She smiled back a little. "I'm going to treat it after the manner in which it was sent. I'm done with heroics, where you are concerned. Mr. Hayden, at first I thought you were serious; and I treated you accordingly, and made myself more or less ridiculous, I'm afraid. I know better now. I had a good laugh over your practical joke of this morning. You gave me a very amusing quarter of an hour."

He looked at her keenly, but still smiling.

"Nonsense! You know perfectly well that I'm serious. Come, what is your answer?"

"You insist? Oh, very well. Then it is no, of course." She smiled and picked up her book again.

Hayden gave a laugh. "Well, of course we won't consider that as final," he said, and returned to his comfortable chair.

Two or three days went by, during which Margaret saw little of Hayden, because two or three men on board were renewing their hopeless task of making unappreciated love to her; whereupon she sought refuge in the society of Ashton Phelps and Betty Sydnor, between whom, she saw and felt, a deep attachment had sprung up. Meanwhile Hayden went about making himself agreeable to other women on board, and looking not a whit disturbed by her indifference.

The effect on Margaret of his attitude fairly startled her. A peculiar, unfamiliar ache persisted in settling round her heart. She violently denied to herself any sentimental tendency. And yet in her inmost consciousness she knew she was defeated—more than that, deeply and irrevocably moved.

It was just at the time when she began to wonder what the next development would be, and to try to gather whether he had entirely given up the chase, when one day, at the afternoon tea hour, he came to her, seated himself close beside her and said:

"I want to ask you a question. Will you answer it?"

"I will, of course—if I can." Then she added quickly: "Providing it isn't that absurd question you wrote to me about the other day."

Hayden opened his eyes wide.

"Oh, dear, no! I should never dream of reopening that, little as I credit your refusal of me. When your mind comes round to the proper point of view, of course you'll tell me so, and then we'll be engaged."

Margaret choked down a desire to burst into laughter.

"Very well, then," she said quite gravely; "I'll answer your question if I can."

"Oh, you can, right enough. Only, I want you to answer me truthfully."

"I'm not in the habit of telling lies, Mr. Hayden," she said in a tone of dignity.

"Oh, yes, you are, every day of your life—loads of them, white and black and all shades of gray. I don't much blame you—you have to tell 'em, I've no doubt, in society—the rules of the game demand it. But for goodness sake don't get to believing them yourself; that's the last stage of fashionable duplicity. But now I'm greatly concerned about this question I want to ask you."

"Yes? Do go on. I'm interested."

Hayden studied her from head to toe. "How much did that gown cost?" he asked finally.

"Is that your question?"

"No—only a 'leader.'"

"Oh! Well, about two hundred, I think. I don't just remember."

"H'm!" Hayden looked thoughtful.

Margaret tried to read his thoughts in his eyes. But his expression was inscrutable. "Do get on with this!" she cried. "I'm devoured with curiosity. What's your really important question?"

"Wait a minute. I've another leader: Why did you come on this trip?"

"For rest. For the voyage. Because I was fagged with the season's round."

"Absolutely?"

"Absolutely."

Hayden balanced the tips of his fingers together. He had a look of hesitation as if he were weighing matters. As if this were suddenly dissipated, he turned to Margaret.

"Which of the men on board are you in love with?"

The hot blood rushed into her face. But she pulled herself up and remembered her determination to meet him on his own ground.

"I don't understand," she said lightly.

"Oh, come, I say, *please*, do be truthful—with *me*!"

"That is the truth—plain and unvarnished. I don't in the least understand what you're driving at."

Hayden coughed politely but incredulously.

"Very well, then, I'll explain," he said calmly. "There is a man on board whom you love, and I want to find out who he is."

"You mean among my own set? That is"—she laughed in slight embarrassment—"exclusive of you?"

"That's what I want to find out."

Margaret shook her head. "Heart whole!" she sang out gaily. But she did not meet his eyes.

Hayden took her tea cup from her and put it aside.

"I'll name over the eligibles on board, and you can nod or shake your head as I come to each one. Heavens—awful thought—it couldn't be one of the married men, could it?"

Margaret gave a little scream of laughter.

"My dear man—no! None of these benedicks is attractive enough to lure me from the path of strictest propriety and rectitude. Remember how *conventional* I am. Had you forgotten?"

"No—only wanted to make sure." His eyes twinkled. "Process of elimination. Works beautifully. Come now; I've got to go and play bridge in fifteen minutes."

"Be careful. I may be planning to make it a *mauvais quatre d'heure*."

He shook his head.

"You think I can't? Don't be too sure. Overconfidence, you know."

"Don't be silly. Come along. Got your nods and shakes ready? There's Gilbert—no? Benton—no? Manners—no? Fred Broom—no? Faber—no? Atkinson, Durwood, Fletcher, Williams—no?"

She shook her head vigorously, smiling up at him.

"Well, so far so good. Now let's see—there are three unmarried men left. This is where we must go slow." He shook a warning finger at her, and then said slowly, a pause after each name:

"MacMillan—Stanley—Bob Elliott? No? Really?" He gave a long contented sigh.

"Splendid! That's all right. Then it's I. But why on earth didn't you say so before? I must rid you of that habit of wasting time." His words were bantering as usual, but Margaret saw that his eyes were tender.

She tried to make a joking retort, but her heart was beating painfully and seemed to choke her. A little voice in her inmost self seemed to be saying over and over: "Oh, dear, this is very strange. I don't remember anything like this happening since you were sixteen and a co-ed." To her dismay, she felt that she was flushing. But above all there was a sense of joy that seemed to flood her whole being. She was furious with herself—but happy.

Finally, with an effort at being light, she said: "Do try to control your ecstasy at this discovery long enough to tell me by what vague process of reasoning you arrive at the conclusion that because I don't care for any of the other men on board I needs must care for you? That's too silly, you know."

"Is it?" He was smiling down at her with a look in his eyes that said, "I love you," as plainly as if he had spoken it. But he did not speak it. He very deliberately took out his watch and looked at the time.

"I've got just five minutes to explain. I don't pretend my logic is infallible, as

logic, but it is quite convincing enough for me—and it ought to be for you. You say you came on this voyage for rest, for a change from the sort of thing you do in town. And yet you come on board with a wardrobe of gowns expensive enough and ravishing enough to turn the head of a Sphinx. Now you *can't* be resting when you are changing your gown four or five times a day. *That's* no change from the sort of thing you do in town. Are you making yourself beautiful for the women on board? They'd rather you wouldn't. Are you making yourself beautiful for a lot of men you don't care for, who bore you to extinction, each one of whom you've refused five or six times?"

Margaret opened her mouth to speak. But Hayden interrupted.

"I know what you are going to say—it's habit and custom and you owe it to Mrs. Cleeves and all that. But does Mrs. Cleeves demand anything more of you than that you shall be comfortable and perhaps dress for dinner in the evening? Does she demand that you keep having your hair done over just as soon as the wind ruffles it a bit? Does she insist that your little shoes must always match your gowns, no matter how many times a day you change? Does she insist that, as for instance last evening, when it had been so rough and almost all the women on board were unable to appear, you should come in to dinner in a gown that was all deep blues and blacks like a storm at sea, cut to show your lovely throat to as perfect advantage as possible, and with not a vestige of a jewel, and nothing to relieve the somberness but a scarf of silver like a lightning streak? Of course you are making yourself beautiful for somebody, for some male, as the primitive races do. And, logical or not, I'm satisfied that I know who the male is. It's I—Jim Hayden—that you love; it's in your eyes this minute, in your eyes, in your heart, as it is in mine. Oh, Margaret, I—"

He stopped quite suddenly and looked at his watch. Then he raised her hand to his lips.

"Will you excuse me? Time's up.

Miss Roberts and the others will be waiting." He turned and left her.

Margaret covered her face with her hands. She wanted to cry aloud, to do something wild, reckless, foolish.

He loved her, in spite of his whimsical way of letting her know. She knew it by every sign, careful as he was to control it—and she was glad—glad!

Realizing that some of the others were coming toward her, she caught up her wraps and ran—ran straight into Mrs. Cleeves's arms.

"Oh, Marion—Marion—I want to speak to you, dear. I think I need a friend this minute more than ever before."

"Dear girl," turning her about in amazement and looking into her scarlet face. "Margaret, what is it?"

"Can't you guess?"

"Hayden?"

Margaret nodded.

"You don't mean—" Mrs. Cleeves held her close. "Bless you dear, bless you! I know you'll be happy," she said huskily. "Now tell me all about it. When is it to be?"

Margaret looked up in a frightened way.

"When's what to be?"

"Why, the wedding."

Margaret sat down weakly. "Oh, dear! Oh, dear!" she wailed.

"What's the matter?"

"I'd forgotten. There can't be any wedding."

"Can't be any wedding? What do you mean?"

Margaret held her head, rocking from side to side with laughter.

"Oh, Marion, what am I to do?" she moaned. "He proposed and I refused him—refused him summarily, with an amount of finality that I gasp to remember!"

"Never mind that, dear," said Mrs. Cleeves soothingly. "He'll ask you again."

"Never—oh, never! He told me so only today. He said that when I came to my senses and realized I cared for him I could go to him and tell him so, and then he'd consider it."

"Well, it seems to me the matter

is quite simple; go to him and tell him."

"I go to *him*? Eat humble pie? I think not! Not if I know myself, Mrs. Dick Cleeves, and don't you think it! He'll wait many a weary day if he expects me to do that!"

"But Margaret, if he said that—"

"He did say it—oh, he did. But *he'll* come to *me*, or there'll be no engagement, do you understand? The very idea! He needs a lesson, anyway, that man!"

It was very funny at table. Hayden would come in cheerily, and when they were seated would look at Margaret with a bland and childlike smile and say:

"Good morning, Miss Gerry. How is the temperature today? Any warmer?"

"No," she would say, with a great show of firmness, "colder. And very clear."

Hayden would lean toward her, in his most teasing way. "No sign of thaw?"

"None whatever."

Then he would say "Right!" very cheerily, and drop the subject.

This went on till the day before they put in at Trondhjem.

Everybody was exuberant over the prospect of Norwegian fiords and scenery. Margaret alone of all the party seemed depressed. She was standing by herself with her elbows on the rail and her chin in her hands. She gave a start as Hayden's voice sounded behind her.

"Time's very short now," he was saying.

"For what?"

"For you to make up your mind."

She turned from him. "My mind is made up," she said.

"Which way?"

"I haven't altered it since I told you I considered you merely a person with an exaggerated sense of his own importance."

"You know that isn't so. Your mind changed, your heart changed some time ago. I knew when it changed. I knew then and I know now. All that prevents you from admitting it is that you've resolved not to give in to me. You want me to propose again. I sha'n't.

A man who proposes more than once shows lack of brains. He isn't convinced himself, or if he is, he doesn't give the woman credit for ordinary understanding."

"Well, we'll say no more about it then."

"Margaret dear, don't try to tell me you don't care—I can read you better than that. Don't be foolish. You've made men beg and plead all your life, without yielding; now yield this once. You know you want to—want to more than you ever wanted anything else in the world."

"Don't—don't!" The tears came up in her throat and choked her. Then her anger flared out at him. "Don't talk to me like that! How dare you try to tell me what's in my mind? Go away; I never want to see you or speak to you again!"

He laughed a little. "You want me to take you to your word?"

"Yes."

"Very well. I'll go below and pack and explain to Mrs. Cleeves. If you've changed your mind before I leave to go ashore, tell me so."

Margaret spent a miserable night. Even the information, imparted with great secrecy, that Betty Sydnor and Ashton Phelps were engaged to be married, failed to cheer her. It rather plunged her into deeper despondency—the sight of their radiant faces was almost more than she could bear.

Early in the morning she came on deck. Hayden stood surrounded by baggage, waiting to go ashore.

Her heart gave a great leap and everything seemed to grow black before her eyes. She realized he was saying farewell. She seemed to be cold all over when he took her hand and said aloud:

"Good-bye Miss Gerry. I don't know if we shall ever meet again." Then in an undertone: "I love you. I shall love you always. If you don't call me back before I leave in the cutter I shall never say that again. Good-bye."

He picked up a rug and began his descent.

Margaret's very breath seemed to

stop. She heard the voices of the crew and then Hayden's, "Thank you. Quite all right. Good-bye, Mrs. Cleeves. Good-bye, everybody"—and an order to cast off. She rushed to the rail. Then something gave way in her heart and she called out in distress:

"Mr. Hayden—oh, Mr. Hayden!"

He looked up at her. "Yes?"

"I—I—please come back!"

"You want me to come back?"

"I—yes, you've forgotten something."

"What?"

"Me!"

"Margaret!" And in utter disregard of the staring, wondering eyes of the crew and all the guests, Hayden scrambled back on board once more and took Margaret in a pair of blue serge arms and held her close.

And Mrs. Cleeves didn't seem in the least surprised.



THE SQUANDERER

By Grace Duffie Boylan

LORD, High Lord, I have squandered well,
Plucked my days like an asphodel;

Petal by petal lightly thrown
To every breeze that is round me blown;

Ta'en my talents and flung them wide,
Golden showers, unmultiplied;

Wasted, scattered, given, not sold!
Stinting neither of love nor gold.

Prodigal squand'rer of thy hoard,
Naught can I claim from thee, O Lord,

When from the four great corners wing
Angel scribes for the Reckoning.

Yet will I make this one request;
Grant me remembrance, amethyst,

That some who pass me, as I go
From life to life, may sense a glow

Of purple radiance, a perfume
As faintly sweet as lilac bloom,

And thus recall some note of me,
As one recalls a melody.

HIS HONOR

By O. M. Dennis

CHARACTERS

TERENCE O'BRIEN (*a political boss*)

WORTH BEEKMAN (*a social leader*)

JOHN GARLAND (*mayor of the city*)

THE WOMAN (*about thirty, handsome and distinguished*)

TIME: *The present.*

PLACE: *A large city.*

SCENE—*A library in the Mayor's house. There is a large fireplace at the left, with huge leather chairs before it. At the back are a large window seat and three windows, the middle window opening outward on a public square. There are bookcases, a safe and a large desk, on which is a telephone.*

A wood fire burns in the fireplace. It is approaching five o'clock on a bleak November day. The wind whistles by at frequent intervals, rattling the windows. O'BRIEN is standing with his hands behind his back, his back to the fireplace. BEEKMAN is seated astride the small chair, his arms resting on its back, facing O'BRIEN.

BEEKMAN

Well, by this time, I suppose, the die is cast.

O'BRIEN

Not quite yet. Committees will report until five o'clock, at which time nominations will be declared in order, Garland's name will be sprung upon the convention, and he will be nominated by acclamation.

BEEKMAN

And it's our night to howl, eh? Nice spontaneous performance! (O'BRIEN makes a deprecatory gesture.) I suppose the Daniel Webster of Mulberry Bend will make the nominating speech.

O'BRIEN

Ignatius O'Connell will do just that—the ablest orator in the land, with the

eloquence of a Demosthenes, the manner of a Chesterfield—

BEEKMAN

And the political instincts of a polecat. (O'BRIEN shows a tendency to bristle.) There, there, old boy, you're the ablest aviator in politics. You fly serenely over the mire through which the rest are crawling. (Thoughtfully.) And yet you must have built your airship in the mire.

O'BRIEN

I suppose I have had my share of mud. I was selling newspapers in the gutter when your grandfather was juggling his New England railroads through the old basket of tricks.

BEEKMAN (*throwing up his hands with a comical gesture*)

I surrender at discretion. (*Both laugh heartily.* BEEKMAN *selects a cigarette with unnecessary care, rises and stalks restlessly up and down.*) What a curiously ill matched team we would appear to the casual observer, eh, O'Brien? I, a scion of the idle rich, fit only to point a moral and adorn a tale; you, a local Napoleon, fitted out with horns and hoofs, or worse, by every cheap cartoonist in New York. Do you know, I haven't been so excited since, at the ripe age of eight, I rose to recite "Casabianca" to a small but select audience. What a queer game, this politics, for me to play!

O'BRIEN

You might play worse. And let me say right here that your name, your means liberally expended, and, most of all, your devotion and hard work during the last few months have meant more to us than you will ever know—or I ever tell you.

BEEKMAN (*visibly flattered*)

It's delightful of you to romance in that way about me, and I couldn't be more pleased. Any slight service I may have rendered was, first to my old Harvard roommate, and second, a tribute to your own energy and—yes, I will say it—that personal fascination you have over me.

O'BRIEN

And now, having played the game once with a master's touch, why withdraw? There is little you might not have, if you only cared.

BEEKMAN (*smiling cynically*)

For what?

O'BRIEN

The next generation, if nothing else. How about the Beekmans to come? Have they nothing to say?

BEEKMAN

There will be no next generation. The stock has degenerated far enough already. And what would I marry? Some overwrought, overtrained, overfed, overeducated girl, all nerves, no

stamina, bored to death already, with the prospect of matrimony as a diversion! No, thank you! I ought to marry a rosy-cheeked dairy maid, who never heard of the emancipation of modern woman, who didn't know the difference between a cocktail and an ice cream soda, and hadn't learned to excuse personal immorality on the score of nervous temperament. And what an interesting rumpus that would make!

O'BRIEN

You are incorrigible.

BEEKMAN

Not at all. Simply a young person with unfashionable, moral leanings. Why don't you take an audience worth while? Why haven't you preached matrimony to Garland?

O'BRIEN

I have, and with little better result. He's such a curiously reticent chap—indifferent, I think, to such things. (*Cautiously.*) Was there ever anything—

BEEKMAN

With Garland? I don't think so. Now that I think of it, though, there was some talk way back in college days—probably the usual nonsense. No, I guess he's happily immune.

O'BRIEN (*enthusiastically*)

There's a man for you! Some joy in shoving him ahead. I tell you, the future sets no bound for him. He can be anything. And I discovered him—fished him out of a batch of police court reporters—he was working for the *Planet* then—and set him going. He's the biggest asset I have today—and today is his victory and ours.

BEEKMAN (*after a pause*)

I have a strange feeling that something terrible is about to happen. I'm as morbidly sensitive as a clinical thermometer.

O'BRIEN

Nonsense, man! The excitement of the last few days has been too much for you. By the way, Gabriel, that old black factotum of Garland's has evolved

a new cocktail. Let's adjourn to the butler's pantry and sample it. *(They walk across the stage.)*

BEEKMAN *(pausing and listening)*

Halloo! Here he comes now. *(They turn. Enter GARLAND at the right.)*

BEEKMAN *(with an exaggerated bow)*

Great Glamis! Worthy Cawdor! Judge thou wert; mayor thou art; governor thou shalt be. Hail, all hail!

GARLAND

You are a fine, healthy looking pair of witches! Well, Chief, how goes the battle?

O'BRIEN

The battle is over. I salute His Excellency, the Governor of the State!

GARLAND

This is just as I would have it—you two and I and our hour of triumph—and its burdens.

BEEKMAN *(absently)*

I have a feeling that something terrible is going to happen.

O'BRIEN

You disgraceful young raven—I believe you would croak at your own wedding.

BEEKMAN

I am sure I would.

GARLAND *(laughing)*

You are overwrought by the strain and tumult of the campaign.

Even a hardened old warrior is sometimes nervous as the hour of destiny approaches—eh, Chief? *(He places a hand on the shoulder of each.)* Seriously, though, gentlemen, my heart is very full tonight. To some men God has given the power of speech, a golden key which I would fain possess, that I might open up the portals of my heart and show you there your names, and yours alone, in letters of gold much tried in fire. Whatever I become or do hereafter I owe to these two friendships—a rare treasure for one lifetime.

O'BRIEN *(visibly embarrassed)*

Hold on, John, my son! I'm too old a dog to be fed on such rare meat. By

the way, John— *(He hurries over to the telephone and examines a small memorandum card.)* Yes, here it is. I have a little surprise for you. Your telephone has been connected by direct wire with the convention hall. By a new and ingenious device, when you remove the receiver we shall all be able to hear the doings there, almost as if we were on the floor. I could hardly keep my hands off it till you came.

GARLAND *(with growing excitement)*

Here! Let's see! *(He removes the receiver, holds it to his ear and starts back.)*

O'BRIEN *(excitedly)*

Leave it off, so that we can all hear.

(The room is filled with a low, dull murmur, which increases steadily to a muffled, indistinct roar, ending in an oddly stifled tumult of handclapping. Individual voices begin to rise above the rest. Shouts of "GARLAND! GARLAND!" are heard above a dull roar of voices, followed by a storm of cheering—and distinct as the tap of a woodpecker comes the banging of a gavel.)

GARLAND's breath catches heavily; he rises, lays down the receiver, draws in a deep breath and returns to his seat by the desk. BEEKMAN and O'BRIEN walk about excitedly. The low tumult ceases gradually, and GARLAND picks up the receiver again.)

GARLAND *(with a grimace)*

Me old friend, Ignatius Webster O'Connell.

(The uproar had ceased entirely and a full, rich voice is heard indistinctly in the rounded periods of an oration—phrases and sentences of which are clearly distinguishable.)

VOICE

... And from an honorable and adventurous youth, surrounded by every care, tenderly nourished for a resplendent future, encouraged by every advantage of culture and refinement ...

BEEKMAN

Pretty, but inaccurate—eh, John? The culture and refinement of the Mills Hotel, where I discovered you. Huh!

THE SMART SET

VOICE

... into the stellar brilliancy of a political career of triumph and of loyal service, unparalleled in the history of this great State . . . (*Applause and confusion.*) . . . as dear to the hearts of millions of his countrymen as the young babe to the devoted mother, on whose loving breast its head nods drowsily to sleep . . .

BEEKMAN

Phew! My nerves are all in shreds. (*He starts violently as a distant clock chimes slowly the hour of five.*)

O'BRIEN (*extending his arm*)

Come out with me for a bit, and leave him to his glory and Ignatius. I'm taking him away for a little while, John. One important matter still remains unattended to.

BEEKMAN

Aha! The little matter that you spoke of—I recall.

(*He lifts his right hand suggestively, and places his left on O'BRIEN'S arm. All three laugh heartily as BEEKMAN and O'BRIEN go out. Their laughter is audible for a moment outside.*)

The WOMAN appears suddenly at the left in front of the closed door. GARLAND does not see her immediately, fascinated, as he is, at the telephone instrument.)

VOICE (*clear and distinct*)

... This is an hour of triumph, an hour brilliant with promise and with hope. Party and State have found a man, fitted above all men to place his firm, strong hands upon the wheel of government, and guide the ship which bears our hopes, our fears, our destinies among the shoals of treachery and misfortune, through storm and calm, into the sunlit future of our dreams; a man above reproach, loyal and true . . .

WOMAN

John Garland. (*GARLAND starts violently at the sound of her voice and hangs up the receiver with a snap. He rises deferentially, but passes his hand over his eyes, startled at her presence.*)

GARLAND (*to himself*)

Surely I dream. Too much excitement has affected my mind. (*He pulls himself together with a visible effort. The WOMAN has not moved, but smiles expectantly.*)

WOMAN

You do not know me.

GARLAND

Your voice is like the sound of distant bells.

WOMAN

You do not know me.

GARLAND

I never longed more greedily for a name which eluded me.

WOMAN

Spoken charmingly, as of yore. But I am little more than a name.

GARLAND (*moving slowly toward the fireplace*)

You speak in riddles. (*He places the armchair for her. She seats herself. They gaze silently at each other for a moment.*) Did you meet O'Brien and Beekman as they went by?

WOMAN

They did not see me.

GARLAND (*incredulously*)

Not see you! (*To himself.*) The passage is three feet wide. There are no curtains.

WOMAN

You are puzzled. Do you know, sometimes I think the cleverest of men have little memory and no imagination. They two are landlord and tenant in a woman's brain.

GARLAND (*starting nervously*)

That voice—where have I heard your voice before? The angels seem to chant a harmony when you speak. It is like music on the evening sea. I have heard it—I would hear no other.

WOMAN (*mischievously*)

You forget Ignatius O'Connell.

GARLAND

He is the voice of the present—brazen; yours of the past—and golden. Pardon me—*(he stiffens slightly)* I forget myself.

WOMAN

You are forgiven. My errand is a hard one—and the old lyric note is not unpleasant as I come; but when I go—

GARLAND *(impulsively reaching out his hand)*

You are not going—I think, ever.

WOMAN

No, I am never really going. *(She smiles oddly and reaches out her hand.)* Draw your chair near while I talk.

(GARLAND seizes the light chair, and placing it at her left seats himself, gazing intently at her. There is a sound of distant music—a campaign melody. The faint glare of a rocket blazes across the window. It grows darker. The windows rattle violently in the wind.)

WOMAN *(raising her hand)*

Listen! *(There is a faint sound of distant cheering. GARLAND, gazing at her, fascinated, does not notice it.)*

WOMAN

I have a message for you.

GARLAND

Well!

WOMAN

I know a place where in the cool, gray dawn the soft mists lie in beauty on the bosom of a lake, and when the first fire javelin is hurled above the shadowy eastern hills, they slowly rise and flit away, close shrouded in their clinging draperies, some through the mystic avenues of air, others along the bowlder-scattered shore and hillward through the labyrinth of pines, pausing, like lovers, for one last long kiss from the sad dryads of the forest glades.

The purple pall along the mountains fades to rosy pink, as comes a glittering burst of golden archery, shot high above the range's loftiest crest, where the last lingering draperies of purple, rose and gold are flung aside before the plunging steeds cloud-mounting with the Sun-God's rolling car.

A thrush lilts softly in a nearby thicket, and a sentinel crow, balanced upon the topmost twig of a sky-towering pine, croaks hoarsely to himself of divers pilfering schemes of evil fame, to be broached later where plump and bearded ears of corn lie hidden by leafy billows of waving green.

GARLAND *(excitedly)*

That is Champlain. And you? *(He leans closer to her.)* Mignon!

WOMAN *(warning him with a gesture)*

So many years ago it seems—in such a dawn a young girl lay there by the shore, where friar pines were shaking out their gowns and chanting low their morning litany, watching a tall blue heron knee deep in the cool waves, his proud crest lowered, listening reverently, marking the glittering, diamond coronet far out upon the lake that told of schools of young fish at their play.

Ah, she was very happy there, my little Mignon, for she was very young, and love was new and strange, and sang weird songs of passion in her wild, red heart. There was a man beside her there—a man, John Garland, not a carved puppet moved about by strings of self-seeking, of ambition, of fame.

She knew so little—fresh from the convent at Montreal—her dreams of gallant knights and ladies fair, and love, love, always of love.

GARLAND *(wildly)*

Mignon l'Amoureux! Mignon—my soul—I cannot endure more! *(His head drops in his hands; his shoulders heave with emotion.)*

WOMAN

The man had sworn to her upon this golden cross that she was all in all, that he would come back for her, *that in the hour of his triumph she should be there.*

GARLAND *(in agonized tones)*

It is true, Mignon, all true.

WOMAN

And when she woke from her sweet dream and knew that he had gone, learned that the gorgeous flower of her romance had another name, knew of the

broken heart of the little gray French doctor, her father—

GARLAND

It is enough—God forgive me! (*His head droops heavily.*) Would God that I had died!

WOMAN (*rising suddenly*)

And now in the hour of your triumph I am here—even as you said, and swore to me upon the cross.

(*There is a glare of red light outside; a bomb explodes in the square, scattering a shower of sparks. The music grows louder, and there is a sound of excited cheering.*)

No man dies alone. Women and women cross the pathway of his life, but at its close the woman is there beside him. She is his soul. Sometimes in life he finds her and clings to her until the end, but not often. Such men are gods. Each man while she is with him is a god, and when she goes a shadow. But in the end death finds her there beside him.

GARLAND

Mignon, my own, I have found you again. Even God forgives the unforgivable. (*He steps toward her with outstretched arms.*) Mignon! Amoreaux.

(*The WOMAN slips the cross from her neck, holds it suspended from its chain, aloft in her right hand, toward him. The cross glows like flame in the semi-darkness. He falls back dazed.*)

WOMAN

Mignon l'Amoreaux died by her own hand fifteen years ago!

GARLAND (*gasping—his face livid with horror*)

Ah! My God! What thing is this? You dead—I dying? (*His breath comes chokingly.*) You jest horribly. (*He rushes forward again to seize her. The*

WOMAN vanishes into nothingness. There is a crash of exploding bombs. The glare grows brighter, the music and the cheering louder. GARLAND rushes to the window, stumbles up the step, tearing at his collar, and dashes back the windows on the tumult without.)

GARLAND (*screaming*)

Stop them! God in heaven, stop them! Air!

(*He falls back blindly, muttering incoherently, rises again and staggers to the fireplace. Shouts of triumph rise from the street. The band begins to play. GARLAND is peering madly into the great chair, clawing at the leather. BEEKMAN and O'BRIEN rush in and switch on the light. Only the desk lamp lights up. GARLAND stumbles over the little chair, seizes it and hurls it savagely at the lamp with an oath. The lamp crashes into a thousand pieces.*)

BEEKMAN

God! What has happened?

(*The cheering grows louder outside. The crowd is singing with the band. Rockets glare now and then across the windows. GARLAND falls groveling in the middle of the floor. The two men rush forward.*)

GARLAND (*gasping*)

Mignon! I come!

(*The WOMAN appears suddenly at the right, holding aloft the glowing cross, looking pityingly upon the prostrate figure. The clock chimes the half-hour. GARLAND rises on one arm weakly, looks up at her and falls back dead. The WOMAN vanishes silently, as suddenly as she appeared.*)

BEEKMAN (*kneeling beside the body on the floor, dazed and horrified*)

Where have I heard that name before?

CURTAIN



A NECESSITY is something we imagine we can't do without.

FOOTPRINTS

By Guy Bolton

TO the man who has been denied the rarer thrills of life, who has, through a series of counter accidents, the parrying strokes of a too zealous Guardian Spirit, escaped accident completely, there may still remain moments of quiet enjoyment not altogether to be despised by those on whom chance has bestowed most fully its blessing of variety.

One of these moments comes to me—for I am such a man—at cigar time, after the simple New England dinner that my old Mary will often prepare for old sake's sake; another has for requirements a cold October afternoon, an open driftwood fire and a pleasant companion to talk with through the twilight; while for a third, I have only to take out of a worn pocket case a certain old briarwood pipe—and light it.

There is about all these pleasures a similarity which might stamp me a mere creature of appetite, and since taste and smell are more faithful handmaidens of memory than their lofty sister senses, I may well make admission my plea for clement judgment. For it is not intrinsically that I prize my "moments"—they all have a connotative value. Hash-eesh silences the importunate clamor of the present, and I turn back, retracing my footsteps along the path of recollection, pausing where the ways diverge to muse on what might now be if that too zealous Guardian Spirit had not plucked at my sleeve—had not led me straight upon my eventless course.

But embers must not be too often stirred, lest the glow become a flame, and the embers ashes. If I were to take out the old briar each evening in my city chambers it would soon cease to bring

me a vision of days spent out of doors—of merging sky and sea; of a long shelving beach running back to a rocky, grass-topped cliff, and of a girl who walked there by my side, our footsteps the only indentations—save the tracks of the gulls—in the otherwise untrodden sand.

So occasionally, indeed, did an alien footprint appear upon "our beach," and then so clearly did it mark the heavy tread of the clumsily booted fisherfolk that we could trace each other, she and I, for miles along the shore. Often she would follow me to the cove, there to find me busy getting ready the little yawl for our morning sail, or more often, I would come down, discover my playmate ahead of me and take up her fitting trail, pursuing it with the tireless avidity of Chincagook, and like Chincagook proceeding unbaflled through the empty stretch when she had made one of her daring little incursions upon the territory to which the sea laid intermittent claims, and where the trace of her dainty shoe would be washed away by the hissing wave that had sent her lightly bounding back to the soft, dry sand.

I might quicken my pace then, for I enjoyed a boyish conviction that my protection was necessary to this airily tripping Nereid, and, indeed, I had seen from earliest childhood enough of this sea to justify some fear—this sea with its treacherous creep up the beach, the fawning retreat of each wave after the bold attack serving to disguise its remorseless encroachment until it has pinned its victim against the overhanging cliffs.

Of course, I always found her safe—descried, as I turned the angle of some promontory, her red parasol or her sea

green parasol or her white parasol—oh, she had an amazing variety—a spot of color in a neutral-tinted landscape. A gull's cry thrice repeated would arrest her; half turned, smiling, her chin tilted up, she would await me, and then we would go off together to view the seabird's nest or the last winter's wreck which she had discovered before my brief vacation commenced.

She came each summer with her father—a retired naval officer. Some doctor had years before prescribed sea air and absolute quiet for the crotchety old invalid, and with no thought of questioning a young girl's willingness to isolate herself, the order was obeyed in the literal fashion of a martinet. No one ever visited Llandrock. It was out of the line of railroads, and the one sign of outside life we had was the biweekly passage of the Halifax steamer—a trail of smoke just above the horizon.

Beside the descendants of the Welsh fishermen who had founded the place, two old stone houses which belonged to my father held the only inhabitants of the place. My parents had come up from their quiet little Portland home upon the same day, year after year, as long as I could remember, and each year upon the same day—a week before the earliest possible appearance of the dreaded equinox they both so firmly believed in—they would close Rockgirt, looking back as they drove down the moorland road with the conviction that this was their last view of the two houses—that *this* year they would be washed away in the "great storm."

The other dwelling was sometimes rented, but for the most part stood idle, awaiting the time when I should need a "place of my own." Bernice and her father—have I mentioned that her name was Bernice?—occupied it during their stay under charge of my old Mary—a younger Mary then, who yet seemed older to my own unconditional youth.

The story was that these twin dwellings had been built by two brothers, shipowners, with the heavy insurance of one of their barques wrecked before their very eyes—and through a skillful manipulation of shore lights, rumor said

—upon the reef outside. Bernice and I weaved many direful tales about this grim legend. We were almost able to convince ourselves that we had seen two gaunt figures walking arm in arm along the beach in the moonlight, and we looked for their footmarks in the morning. The sea had washed them out, perhaps, or perhaps the ghostly tread left no print upon the sand—an ingenious suggestion that served at once to silence skepticism and to add another thrill. At any rate, we professed a certainty that a mighty hurricane would come some day, bearing ashore a waterlogged boat with a skeleton drooping over the wheel. The undermined cliff would crumble before the blow of its massive prow, and the twin houses, tokens of the long forgotten crime, be swept down, down into the cavernous gulf of the sea. Perhaps it will so happen some day—but not while I am there. My Guardian Spirit is too careful—I am the Man to Whom Nothing Happens.

It is the chief irony of my futility that I come so near to touching the heights of life. I prepare myself for the wild grapple with emotion and my tense hands clutch at air—my Guardian Spirit has been there before me. I remember the day that I parted from Bernice on the shore of the cove. We had been sitting for an hour side by side on the sand, our backs against my boat, and Bernice rose with me as I glanced at my watch and reluctantly pronounced my own sentence of banishment. A truant waving wisp of her fair hair was flattened against her cheek by the breeze—the same breeze that brought to the same rounded, sun-kissed cheek a tinge of deeper color. Yet, maybe, it was not the breeze alone—maybe the frank worship of my gaze had something to do with it. Youth flashed to youth as our eyes met. Her tender, playful smile faded in the solemnity of a deeper tenderness. I forgot my vow to win fortune—to see my way, at least, before asking another to walk that way with me. I forgot the city boarding house, forgot the precarious hold I had upon my drudgery, the pittance which it brought me. My heart beat high; I took her hands in

mine, and then—and then my Guardian Spirit nudged old Peter Bassett, who hailed me from the cliff top. There was just time to catch the train. He had the wagon with him and my things. I pressed my lips to her hands, then, with a choked "Good-bye," I dropped them and turned away.

It is here that I always pause as I retrace my footsteps, ponder a minute wistfully and then lean forward in my chair and knock the ashes from my pipe against the bars of the grate. Perhaps I rise with a sigh and lift from its place of honor upon the mantelpiece her portrait, with her little boy at her side. Her arm clasps him close; his arm—by adding a hassock of five years' growth, I fancy—is made to encircle the back of her chair. Over the bright nautical insignia upon his other sleeve there is a band of crape. Oh, the ironies that a fatal futility can devise! There is no doubt of the sigh this time, as I set the picture down again where the clear eyes of the woman I love can gaze out upon the big, lonely room with its rich furnishings—witnesses of the fortune which came too late.

We were seated side by side on the sandy beach of the cove, our backs against the very boat that once was mine, and that now, its glistening sides changed to a dingy blue, its canvas cover stained and torn, was indistinguishable from the rest of the lumbering fishing fleet to which it belonged.

"Nothing is changed, yet all is different," I said, my glance resting upon the chubby, duck-clad figure, whose brown legs were kicking up a great to-do in the shallow waves that lapped the beach.

Bernice caught up my unspoken thoughts with one of those swift intuitive dives that had once made me laughingly liken her to a seagull—she had an eye always for what was beneath the surface. "Why do you think something added means something else taken away?" she asked.

"Because it does, dear lady; that is the only answer I can give you. The joy of manhood comes as the joy of

youth departs. Two suns cannot shine in one sky."

"But with the moon there are a myriad stars; why do you seek so much?" There was a tone almost of entreaty in her earnest voice. "Why must you have *one* light to fill your world?"

"So you bid me be sensible and cry for the moon!" I laughed, as the brown legs landed their owner with a jump and a slide to a sitting position in front of us. "King Jamie will agree with me that crying for the moon is a waste of good salt water."

The Stuart monarch clasped his toes and rocked back and forth thoughtfully. "I fink—I *fink*," he said, "'at muvver cries for the moon, for I've seen her sitting in the window cryin' and lookin' at it."

"I'm afraid a sleepy little boy isn't quite sure what he does see," his mother remarked, but I noticed a flush mount to her cheek. I wondered why. Women are creatures of such sensibility that their tears need no excuse, and a mother's peep at a sleeping child may well bring wet lashes. I knew enough to at least be sure that it was not the thought of her dead husband that had made her weep.

I changed the subject by asking as to the health of the horseshoe crab who lived in a pool behind the shore rocks which formed the hilt of the reef. He had appeared well an hour ago, if somewhat less active under the goading prods of a wooden spade than was to be desired, but Jamie thought that probably it was time to investigate again. I declined, in the face of his evident mystification, to desert his mother for the interesting crustacean, and so Bernice and I were once more left to ourselves.

"Jamie talks of nothing but his swimming lessons. It is good of you to be so kind to him," she said.

"His company quite repays one; I could almost wish it were not so, for then you might discern an ulterior motive in what you call my kindness."

"You wish me to believe that it is all for my sake!" she rejoined with that simple directness she has never lost. "I could sooner think that it is because you

are, as I say, good, and love little children in the way all who are good must love them."

"If you feel sure of that," I appealed, "can't you feel sure that I should love Jamie always, not only because he is a little child but because he is *yours*? Can't you feel sure that all the care a devoted father could give him I would give him? You were willing once to place yourself in my keeping—you have said so; why won't you trust me a little further?"

She raised her head; the eyes that met mine were moist with compassion. "My dear, dear friend," she said, "must we go over this each time we meet? We cannot return along the way we came—for the Angel of Duty with a flaming sword is set at the door of our Eden. I have told you why I feel that it would be wrong for me to marry you. You want love; you want the burning sun, not the diffused evening glow of friendly affection, and if I gave myself to you, it should be heart and soul with no reservations concerning my boy. Surely you see I could not do that without the justification of a great love—only if I cared for you more than for Jamie would it be right."

"Our love for him should be an added bond between us," I pleaded. "He should be as my own child."

Again the color tinged her cheek. "Like—but not the same," she said. "There might be others—I should wish it so; and Jamie would feel the difference. You would mean to be the same toward him, but it would be impossible. You cannot overcome instinct."

I glanced down at the little pair of shoes and socks that lay between us. The symbolism killed my struggling hope as no words could have done. "Is it nothing to you that my life should be wasted?" I cried, my bitterness driving me to the most selfish of appeals.

She laid her hand on mine. "Don't," she said; "that is what hurts me more than anything ever has hurt me in the world. Your life will not be wasted—it *must* not. Some woman will give you her whole being, not the half that I

might offer. I pray every night that it may be so."

I made no answer; there was nothing more to say; but I raised her hand to my lips as I had done in that very spot seven years before.

"My dearest, dearest friend," she murmured with the cruel kindness of a tender woman.

"Nothing is changed, yet all is different," I had said, voicing in the bitter formula of disenchantment the deeper bitterness of an old enchantment revived in fullest measure, with its Tantalus torture of the unattainable that might have been.

The seven years that had elapsed since Peter Bassett broke in upon the divine folly of my young love showed but few changes. My father was still sitting in his chair by the wide seaview window, with his bundle of week old *Portland Gazette*s by his side and his tripod telescope focused expectantly upon the untraveled horizon. My mother, like the "Queen of Hearts" I called her, was doubtless in the pantry happily busied with all the little unnecessary domestic anxieties—pickles and preserves, the week's washing and window cleaning—that were her delight. She was still as tremulously anxious to hear my "news"—the news which never came. "You have spoiled me, mother," I always said, hiding as well as I might with a smile the pang her question brought me. "I am looking for a girl who combines all your own perfections—and find myself condemned to perpetual bachelordom."

Only the Admiral was missing. Bernice had been thrown an orphan upon the world six months after our memorable parting. She had not visited Llandrock since that time until this summer. Its associations, she told me, were to her those of shadow and sunshine, mingled like the changing light upon a sea that lies beneath wind-driven clouds.

"Nothing is changed, yet all is different"—I repeat the words as I seek her trail upon the sand, telling in its straighter course of the change that, in

all this seeming changelessness, has been wrought in the fitting nymph of yesterday. And by the side of those little footprints that I have so often followed go the dancing steps of a child. I wonder is there any sign so slight but has its message for our dull eyes?

As I turn a promontory they come into view, and a gull's cry thrice repeated brings the smaller figure galloping back, attempting an echo in joyous baby way. The mother comes to meet me slowly.

"Swimming time, is it?" she asks. "You see how my arts fail when you appear, and I was actually in the midst of our enthralling tale of the wreck."

"Tell me—I have forgotten," I lyingly declare.

So with many interrupting "whys" and attendant explanations, the story keeps pace with our leisurely steps. Breaks in the thread of the narrative occur, too, whenever a sidling crab on a scramble for the water, a piece of luscious red seaweed or what not of the marine flora or fauna catches the straying eye of youth. And whenever such a halt is called, I glance back at the train of footsteps, hers and mine, and between them, with seven-foot breaks when he would draw up his legs and swing, are little Jamie's.

Thus the days pass with no further word of the fox that I clasp to my bosom. Scarcely one goes by but it brings some new pang, some fresh reminder of word or look that takes me back to the days when "Love and Hope were wedded happily within my heart."

But I must not let you think of me as sunk in Jaqueslike gloom. I am no Hamlet gnawing my finger ends as I chafe at destiny. There are hours of pure delight, of actual light-hearted merrymaking, when the three of us play games together, throw sticks for the vociferous Rover—who lives at the cove, and whose bold heart seems to fail him whenever he has swum within six inches of the object he was so anxious to retrieve—or go on crabbing expeditions up the cove. Fishing has always been too cruel for my inconveniently tender heart, but I can manipulate so platonic

a weapon as the crabnet with an enjoyment deliberately blind to the grim shadow of the coming *auto-da-fé* in the kitchen.

Sometimes we all take a dip in the surf together, Bernice dropping the shrouding mackintosh at the sea's edge and stepping forth Phryne-wise—and with a full measure of Phryne's glorious beauty—in the trim blue bathing dress that so charmingly becomes her girlish figure. For the most part, though, we elders give way under the activities imposed upon us, and are content to sit with our books—an unopened pile which proves the gluttonous intellectual eye larger than the sated literary stomach—idly watching the gambols of childhood in company with Rover and a fisherman's boy, Rolf by name.

Thus were we occupied one afternoon, Bernice under her sunshade, I, propped upon one elbow idly casting pebbles with vicious forearm swings into the water. The two youngsters and their canine follower had wandered off in a search for shells along the beach.

"And so you are to leave on Saturday?"

"We must go back. I had not intended to stay so long, and besides, I shall have to stop and do some shopping before starting for home; Jamie has torn every garment he possesses on these rocks. The shoes and socks are the only things that have received light wear."

I paid no heed to her digression. "Home," I echoed. "Burlington—New York—even a school geography may be read as tragedy."

"Burlington is not so very far from New York. Why do you never come to see us?"

"I shouldn't care to," I answered, letting slip my smiling mask. "At least, I've always thought I shouldn't—perhaps I won't be able to keep from coming now, but I shall certainly try."

She gave her old answer to all such allusions by laying her hand on mine; the slight pressure of sympathy met an answering token of gratitude, and we sat thus silent for several long minutes. We were aroused by a strange, an awful

sound, that drowned the droning music of the surf.

The roar grew in volume as I struggled dazedly to my feet. A great cloud enveloped the headland which jutted out across the beach about a half-mile from where we sat. A confused vision of earthquake and tidal wave set my imagination wavering, and then glancing ahead of me, I caught at one concrete fact that banished speculation and sent me forward at a run. The footprints of a dog and two barefoot children were plainly marked in a course that led straight to the mysterious danger beyond the jutting spur of cliff.

As I ran the cloud of dust lifted and revealed a change that made me doubt my vision. The great beetling headland, which, cut away beneath by the waves, had stretched out over the thin strip of beach like the projecting gable of a medieval street front, was gone, and in its place a peninsula of rock sloped from the top of the hundred-foot cliff to a stragglng termination of scattered boulders beyond the furthestmost line of breakers.

A horrible fear that the two boys might have been under it was swept away by a relief that merged in a new anxiety as I discerned the figure of the fisher boy struggling on the pile of debris, and then realized that he was alone.

I hurled my question at him twenty paces away. At that distance I could plainly see the agitated excitement on his face. His legs were badly cut by the sharp edges of the rock, but he scarcely seemed to notice them in his wild panic.

"He's gone! Th' beach has slipped doon inter th' sea!"

There was a groan at my side. Bernice sank to her knees, her face buried in her hands. She must have been just behind me all the way.

"Get down to the cove as fast as you can go; bring a boat," I commanded, and the little fellow set off bravely on his bleeding feet.

I bent over the motionless woman, and my arm involuntarily encircled her heaving shoulders. "I am going to bring him back to you, dear," I said, and

added, "God willing," under my breath as the boom of a heavy breaker sounded in grim reply to my bold assertion. Then I turned and stepped out into the water, heading for a point where the barrier appeared easier to scale.

My Guardian Spirit awoke to danger. Bernice struggled to her feet and stretched out her arms toward me. "Don't leave me, too, Harry! The boy said he was gone, and there is no one else in the world. The boat is coming—"

Her words died in her throat; her lips quivered pitifully; but a great wondering happiness surged up within me, drowning for the moment all sense of tragedy, of the anguished struggle those words must have cost her.

She had stumbled blindly to my side, knee deep in the water, and I took one supreme moment from life before the final plunge. I would cheat my fate at the very last, if this was to be the last. I had lived but I would not die the Man to Whom Nothing Happens.

Her lips fluttered against mine as I crushed her to my breast. "Good-bye. If I don't come back, remember—I loved you." Suddenly temptation seized me. The intoxication of that second's ecstasy filled my whole being with a new love of life. Was I to give up that life on the uncertain chance of saving another—another that had stood between me and happiness, a barrier more hopeless than this great moraine which lay before me? The thought of what life might mean to me now mounted to my head like wine. Thank God, I can say that, as the daze passed from my mind, I found myself struggling against the fling of a deep sea roller that broke angrily against the newfound obstacle the shattered headland laid in its path.

On hands and knees I scrambled over the crumbling mound. I gained the top, lacerated and panting, and cast back one glance at Bernice, lying, her face upon her arms, on the shore. Then, as my eyes swept the scene below me, the perspiration chilled suddenly upon my brow. Two hundred feet away the thin strip of beach, uncovered until an hour from flood tide, ran on under the

cliff face as before, but between that point and the ground on which I stood the rocky wall sheered straight down into deep water. A memory of a talk I once had with old Peter Bassett flashed to my mind and added to the sheer animal terror that seized me. We were looking at a coast survey, and the old man laid his stubby finger upon the patch of water just off the headland which was labeled "quicksand" with a "40" written over it. "Their soundin' rope must ha' been short that time," he said. "I've dropped an eighty-fathom lead line there, an' never touched bottom, at that. It's my belief there is no bottom; leas'tways, there's a great hole which is what makes the down drag so awful."

I had laughed at him then, and twitted him on the subject of his bottomless pit many a time since, but with this material evidence before me—the wide beach swallowed up entire—the old man's childish fancy took new hold upon my mind.

No bravery, only the craven's conscience-stricken fear of his cowardice, could have spurred me to the plunge. Down, down, down, I seemed to go, the water surging past my ears, and then, with no intervening sense of reversed motion, I was at the surface, fighting inch by inch, gasping and desperate, in the grip of the undertow.

A thousand horrors possessed me. It seemed to my straining eyes as though the beach were receding—slipping slowly into the slough of quicksand, and once, when for a moment my straining muscles failed me and I felt myself sucked below, a derelict with a grinning skeleton lashed to the wheel passed before my vision—the wrecker's victims, a grewsome company, huddled together against the waterlogged bulkhead. Had

I been the hero some—a dearly loved little company—try to paint me, no such disordered fancies would have found me easy prey. As it is, I remember little of what happened after. There was a dog's bark—that stands out sharp and clear—a dramatic incident in a drift of eventless years. There was a moment when I cried "Thank God!" and clasped a small shivering human body close to mine, then a long blank of motionless inaction, while the water rose from ankles to knees, and the ache of the muscles which held us to the cliff face with a limpet's hold grew until it had drawn my brain to the dull reiteration that this grip meant life.

At last came a shout—not from the rescuers' boat, for which I looked, but from the cliff top. A stout rope with a heavy canvas bag attached was lowered, and when a few moments later another shout, with which was mingled the glad cry of a woman's voice, told me that Jamie was safe, my Guardian Spirit in sheer bravado whispered that there was still a chance to play the hero. Certainly a man whose morbidly sensitive sympathies will balk at impaling a worm upon a fishhook could not risk the haunting sound of a dog barking in unheeded appeal upon a ledge of rock beneath a cliff, as the remorseless tide rose around him. Had the quicksand wrought further havoc while I waited alone, the anti-vivisectionists might have lost a member and found a martyr, but the Guardian Spirit willed it otherwise.

Down below the cheated waves broke angrily. Down below lay fear, turmoil and lonely struggle. I am given to giddiness, so I turned my face up to the sunshine. Safety, happiness, love lay above, and steadily, surely drawn by strong arms I went on up—up—up.



LOOSE habits generally lead to tight places.

THE QUESTIONS

By Louise Driscoll

OUT in the night they go, bitterly wept to the winds of it,
Cried to the silence that catches and wraps them and folds them,
And hides from the soul that travailed and cried in the throe and the
grind of it,
Whither? and whence? and why?—hurled to the void that holds them.

Whither? and whence? and why?—how the world echoes the pain of it!
Scarred with the battle unfairly met, weary with burden and heat.
Children's children and men unborn shall yield anew to the strain of it,
Buying them clothes and choosing them loves and making them bread to eat.

Look—and before your eyes go heroes with names undying,
And women with quiet eyes that have looked on pain to bear it,
And love that lingers above them all, stronger than fear, undying;
Facing life unafraid with the strength and the will to bear it.

Silence receives, and the void unfilled answers no appeal to it,
And the stars are still and the mighty wind goes unanswering by.
And the lips of the dead are quieted and peace is the holy seal on it,
While children open their eyes to weep—*whither? and whence? and why?*



THE AUTUMN MOON

By Edna Worthley Underwood

A RIPPLE of light 'cross a purple sky,
Then a gold boat on it riding high—
The moon, the autumn moon!

A thrill like the pulse at the heart of spring,
O'er the world a golden balloon swings—
The moon, the autumn moon!

A flute's clear call when it calls to doom,
Pale Sorrow weaving at Joy's loom—
The moon, the autumn moon!

ALI-BABA

Par Henri Barbusse

TOUTE la famille avait participé avec un empressement ému et désordonné à la toilette d'Ali-Baba, qui devait être rendu avant neuf heures à l'exposition canine.

Le colossal saint-bernard, immobile sur ses pieds larges comme des soucoupes se laissait enjoliver par cette demi-douzaine de mains flottant autour de lui. Il faisait rouler les petites boules de jais de ses yeux dans leur bordure de rubis, secouait un peu sa figure drapée de vastes rides, et ajustait avec des frissons d'aise sa fourrure moutonneuse et fraîchement lavée sur son dos large comme un établi.

On eût dit, déplacé mais fêté, dans le modeste logement de l'employé, quelque parent riche, vêtu d'une pelisse neuve.

Enfin toute la famille descendit: le père, la mère sur la figure grasse et molle de qui un sourire était toujours prêt à fondre, Ali-Baba qui s'avancait sur les marches étroites et maigres du même air monumental dont il eût descendu du mont Blanc; puis Antoinette et Ludovic, qui, malgré leurs jambes trottinantes, se forçaient à un grave maintien, leurs petites têtes posées sérieusement au bout de leurs cous raides.

Dehors, l'immense chien, dont le dos ondulait au milieu de ses amis verticaux à des hauteurs inusitées, sema comme d'habitude l'étonnement et l'admiration. On s'arrêtait net en l'apercevant; et chaque passant se récriait, naïvement ou grossièrement, selon son éducation.

— Comme on parle de nous! flûta Ludovic.

... A l'exposition, Ali-Baba eut un succès monstre. Et cela consola de toutes ses peines la mince famille qui

avait couvé le géant à quatre pattes et vivait autour de lui comme autour d'une table.

Certes, son développement avait été une surprise; on ne s'attendait pas à cette fantastique transformation le soir où le père rapporta un petit paquet de laine remuante, toute salie de boue, qu'il venait de trouver dans le ruisseau. Mais on s'était attaché à lui tout de suite et c'est après qu'il avait tant grandi. On l'avait aimé comme un enfant, puis comme un frère. On l'aimait, et on le lui répétait sur tous les tons, et il vous regardait chaque fois. On lui mettait les bras autour du cou, et il restait attentif. Que de caresses il partageait doucement avec qui les lui faisait; que de baisers il thésaurisait sur sa toison de neige tiède et d'or souple!

Il n'y avait pas de désagréments, de sacrifices qu'on ne se fût imposés depuis dix-huit mois, pour garder ce commensal exagéré dans l'étroit appartement, auquel il était si peu destiné qu'on évoquait en l'y voyant tel gros fruit artificiellement développé dans une carafe. ... A mesure que les appointements de M. Lenglé augmentaient, ils diminuaient tout de même parce qu'Ali-Baba augmentait beaucoup plus vite. ...

Mais qu'importe! Le chien était non seulement leur joie, mais aussi leur orgueil, leur originalité, ce par quoi ils étaient incomparables aux autres, et bien supérieurs à ceux qui, à la campagne ou à la ville, végétaient dans une situation sociale similaire: à gratter la terre ou à gratter du papier.

Donc, à l'exposition où l'on voyait derrière des barreaux sa grosse physiologie de prisonnier innocent, Ali-Baba fut très fêté. Le père y passait tous les

jours, ayant sa carte permanente d'exposant, et rapportait des nouvelles triomphales. Tout le monde s'arrêtait devant le numéro 681. Le gardien, décoré de la médaille militaire, avait affirmé, presque promis, qu'il aurait le premier prix de la classe des jeunes.

... Le soir du troisième jour, le père ne rentra qu'à huit heures sonnant. La figure bouleversée, il jeta :

— Je viens de la campagne !

Puis, comme trois bouches ouvertes l'interrogeaient, il raconta d'une voix entrecoupée :

— M. Ternisien, le grand éleveur, tu sais, eh bien, il a voulu acheter Ali-Baba. . . . Trois mille francs ! J'ai dit non, bien qu'il m'ait expliqué avec raison, cet homme, qu'il serait mieux dans un chenil fait exprès que dans notre cinquième. . . . Enfin, bref, voyant qu'il ne l'aurait pas pour de l'argent, tu ne sais pas ce qu'il m'a proposé à la place du chien ? Tu ne trouveras pas : une maison ! Une petite maison de campagne, toute meublée, avec un jardin, à Saint-Maur, dans la Seine. . . . Comme je ne voulais pas avoir l'air d'accepter tout de suite, tous ces messieurs qui étaient là m'ont conseillé, en toute loyauté, de ne pas hésiter : si beau que soit le chien, c'est une affaire épatante. Il m'a mené là-bas. J'ai vu la maison, notre maison ! . . .

— Ah ! tremblotèrent-ils tous les trois, suffoqués.

Après un silence, Mme. Lenglé hasarda :

— Et lui ?

— On le verra tant qu'on voudra. Il restera quelque temps à Paris avant de partir pour la Suisse. . . . Mes enfants, nous sommes propriétaires ! On ira à Saint-Maur dimanche. . . .

Une maison à eux, avec des meubles dedans, des arbres autour ! C'était trop miraculeux pour ne pas griser les pauvres gens. On sourit, on rit, on battit des mains à la vue de ce soudain paradis. . . .

Quand le papier fut signé, le samedi soir, et que la maison, avec ses meubles et ses arbres, fut enfin acquise, on respira.

Un grand silence solennel s'étendit. . . .

Puis la voix de Ludovic s'éleva, tout doucement.

— Ali-Baba ! dit-il.

— On a une maison, répondit Antoinette.

On parla d'elle. On y alla, le dimanche.

Elle était charmante, posée sur le tapis étroit d'une pelouse qu'une palissade bouclée d'une grille ceinturait. On s'extasia, on s'affola de la féérique oasis. Puis, vers six heures, le soleil déclina, après avoir tourné dans le minuscule domaine, et prit congé comme un brillant seigneur.

Le crépuscule mit partout son léger voile de deuil. Les deux enfants se prirent par la main, se sentant tout d'un coup comme perdus dans le vide causé par le départ du vaste ami.

— Qu'est-ce qu'il fait, en ce moment ? s'enquit l'un d'eux.

— Il doit s'ennuyer ! dit l'autre, les mains vides.

— Regardez, regardez, disait le père, il y a là le puisard. . . . Vous avez vu, le petit machin qui forme serre ? Ce trou, c'est la cave. . . .

Un chien aboya dans le voisinage. Tous, ils s'arrêtèrent net de parler et d'écouter pour penser à la même chose. Puis ils se remirent à fureter plus lentement.

A ce moment, la grille fut violemment secouée.

— C'est lui ! C'est lui ! trépigna Ludovic.

C'était lui, en effet. Derrière la grille s'appliquait sa tête gigantesque de lion maternel. . . .

Tous les quatre se levèrent. . . . Ils eurent un élan instinctif vers la porte, puis s'arrêtèrent, échangèrent un regard désespéré.

— Il s'est sauvé ! balbutia l'homme, la bouche tirée de travers.

— Va ouvrir ! dit la mère d'une voix mal assurée.

Ludovic trotta sur le gravier. Les autres restèrent là, debout, un peu tremblants, comme des enfants pris en faute, essayant de dissimuler au visiteur ce qu'ils étaient en train de faire, ne sachant pas ce qu'ils allaient lui dire.

UPPER CLASS AND OPERA GLASS

By George Jean Nathan

ABOUT eleven o'clock of the morning following the initial metropolitan presentation of "The Lion and the Mouse" a number of years ago, a man approached the box office window of the Lyceum Theater and said: "I've just read the *Herald's* review of last night's show and I want to buy a seat for this evening." Daniel Frohman, standing close by, overheard the fellow's words and, with a puzzled look, stepped up to him. "But, my dear sir," remarked Mr. Frohman, "the *Herald* notice was an awful roast!" The stranger didn't hesitate a moment. "I know it," he answered. "That's why I think I'm going to like the play."

While I appreciate that I am violating one of the strictest canons of critical etiquette in giving away this little brotherhood secret, and while I appreciate full well that what I am about to say may be taken as *lèse-majesté* of the most execrable species, I simply cannot resist the odious temptation any longer. I can only prostrate myself at my comrades' mercy—or sense of humor—and petition for absolution. But the fact of the comparison is that after I had read several of the more derogatory newspaper reviews of certain features in George Bronson Howard's latest play, "SNOBS," I just *knew* I was going to like it immensely. My reason for this, however, was not precisely similar to that of the Lyceum customer. That "The Lion and the Mouse" was intrinsically a despondent dramatic specimen, despite its undoubted money making proclivities, even so consistent an enemy of the *Herald* as Mr. James Gordon Bennett could not deny—that is, unless he were also a heavy drinker, a

member of a drama club that discusses the stage in hotel parlors on Sunday nights or a man who honestly believes every American citizen should serve his time on the jury.

What caused me to anticipate a joyous evening was by no means the criticism directed at the play as a play, but rather the concurrent animadversions as to the "society" types treated and handled by the dramatist. My attention to this specific portion of the reviews had been brought about by my masseur, who, while plying his trade and my muscles, said to me with a large indignation: "Say, boss, did you see what d' newspapers said about 'Snobs'?" I looked at François and beseeched him to continue. "Dey said d' society atmosphere in it was bum! Gee, and I saw d' show last night, and *not wan* defect could I observe. Take it from me, boss, and beg your pardon, but you critic guys is mutts!"

As you may easily surmise, my insulted curiosity was aroused. I pressed the bell and had the papers borne in to me. I turned quickly to my brothers' remarks and read their acidulous comments on the conduct of the alleged "society" characters in the play. The consensus of estimate was that no "society" persons ever looked or acted as they were made to appear and deport themselves in "SNOBS." And then I bethought me of François's conception of the case. Clearly, here was a marked divergence of opinion! I could not find it in my mind to dismiss François's appraisal supinely, for I was forced to recall that it is often given a lowly masseur, as it similarly is a masseuse, to see society under its skin, to

see it stripped of deceiving broadcloth and satin, to see it in its plain, everyday being. And that, when all is said and done, is the one and only position from which to make able social discrimination. The trained eye can pick the one man to the manner born out of a hundred in the gymnasium swimming pool, where that same eye might be cheated in the drawing room. Breeding tells in the body! Human beings and horses are alike in this regard. I know a man—an upstart real estate agent—who in smart clothes looks for all the world a gentleman, a dandy to the fingertips, a gallant, lettered beau. Who looks it, I say! And yet, in truth, that man is an abject vulgarian, a bald bounder, for all his accumulated manners, all his purchased polish. Catch him under the shower bath and he would not be able to bluff his clothed air for a moment. Judy O'Grady and the Colonel's lady and their masculine relatives never were, never will be, never can be, sisters or brothers under their skin—at least, so far as "society" goes. And the curious paradox of it all is that the thing is not at all a question of physique in the barber or débutante sense of the word, but rather one of grain and fiber. For an amplification of this extremely delicate topic, however, modesty, the postal laws and the editor compel me to refer the reader either to his family physician or the nearest veterinary.

With a grin of greedy expectation, accordingly, I hied me to the playhouse where the subject of critical social debate was in the process of presentation. And it was not long before I knew that my suspicions had been correct—that it was not so much a collection of society characters who acted unlike real society persons that had drawn the censures from my forgetful brothers' pens as a collection of society characters who acted unlike the society characters in all the many "society" plays that had gone before. The sudden change, the revolutionary shift, had proved too much of a shock. When one has been brought up theatrically to believe that the Kyrle Bellevs are strictly "society" in every detail, there

is going to be a grand fight on when a bolder playwright asks his audience to accept, in lieu of the long established Bellew brand of suave and polished stage society character, the sort that conducts itself like a drummer elbowing his way to the olive bowl at the end of the bar. That, in a manner, is what Mr. George Bronson Howard has asked of us, and I, for one, freely, honestly and fearlessly award him the silver plate for his courage. As a result of his keen observation, his play, characterized as a satirical social farce, stands out pre-eminently as one of the most amusing and faithful presentations of real American society types that the native stage has revealed in a very long time.

It has been urged against the society characters in the play that they do not conduct themselves *as* society persons. Truth to tell, real society persons rarely do! How many of us have seen at our clubs on various occasions a most "social" member trying to turn a somersault on the library table or chin himself on the chandelier! How many of us have seen our cotillion-leading fellow member talk back to the waiter on the veranda of the country club and threaten to punch his damned head off because he hadn't seen to it that Italian vermouth was put in in place of French! And how many of us have seen some of society's favorite daughters act at a dinner dance like chorus girls or flip manicure ladies! It is only the middle class that acts correctly and in the accepted "society" manner on all occasions. Your true gentleman may eat artichokes with the sugar tongs with impunity and safety—because he knows better and people know it. But your imitation gentleman would not dare do such a thing, not, to be sure, because he did not know any better, but because he would fear that the true gentleman with whom he was dining might *think* he didn't know any better.

"SNOBS" is one of the few farces since the day of Charles Hoyt that makes use of thought in place of the usual slamming doors, and humor in place of the usual allusions to Hoboken, hangovers and ex-President Rosenfeld.

This, of course, serves in the nature of a serious handicap so far as a large proportion of New York audiences is concerned. I am, however, not one of those pseudo-cynical commentators who believes that a New York audience does not want to think when it goes to the theater. By no means! It *wants* to think, but it does not know how. One of the lines in the play, for instance, reads as follows: "Aristocracy is not a question of birth, but a condition of mind. An aristocrat may be a king, a banker, a tramp or a thief—but he won't be a tradesman, a salesman, a clerk or a beggar." Hearing this sentiment, one of the two young men seated back of me uttered an exclamation of profound disgust and said to his neighbor: "H'm, that was written just for effect. I'd like to know why a clerk can't be an aristocrat!" I turned around, had a look—and understood. Another bit of dialogue goes thus: "What do you think of this play, 'Man and Superman'?" "I can't say I understand it." "Well, when people like you begin to understand Bernard Shaw, we'll have anarchy!" I had changed my seat to get a better view of the stage, and in the rear of me now sat a woman and her trousered convoy. Directly after the dialogue in point, a luscious palate gurgle emanated from the woman. "Who's Shaw, Joe?" she asked of the being next her. "Shaw," replied that worthy, "is the son of Mary Shaw, the Ibsen actress."

Mr. Howard's satire is evolved through the story of a milk wagon driver who suddenly learns that he has succeeded to the title of Duke of Walshire, and through the subsequent adventures of himself and his furnace tender friend (who poses as the titled one) in the various layers of American society. With a sentiment or two and a detail or two you or François or I may find a quarrel, but I do not believe I exaggerate when I tell you that "SNOBS" is about as thoughtful and consistently entertaining a farcical satire as our native records show. Frank McIntyre essays the role of Disney, the milkman, and gives the most pleasurable performance of his

career. Miss Willette Kershaw, however, as the representative of the upper middle class element in the play, fails to live up to the place I accorded her in my last season's dramatic decameron as the result of her capable endeavors in "The Country Boy."

"What is John Drew appearing in this year?" I overheard one woman ask another recently in one of the numerous New York hotel speak-easys that masquerade as tearooms with the aid of a couple of pieces of tapestry, a few palms and an ogling violinist. "Oh," purled the second woman rapturously, "he's appearing in the handsomest blue-black tennis blazer trimmed with white braid that I ever laid eyes on." And when I smiled broadly in spite of myself, the two young ladies at the next table, who had certainly overheard the bit of conversation as well as I, insisted to the headwaiter that I must be trying to flirt with them!

In most women's eyes Mr. Drew's plays and talent are the work of his tailor. But the dears will come to know better one of these days, for we must remember that it took many of our good, religious neighbors quite a few years to realize that Ethel Barrymore's art did not rest entirely in a lozenge and that George Cohan's ability did not begin and end in nasal catarrh. It takes a large element in the American population as much time to recognize actual capacity and aptitude as it does for that same element to awaken to actual incapacity and inaptitude. Once give the American theatergoing public the clairvoyant power to discriminate between art and poster effects, between originality and sensationalism, between personality and "personality"—and we shall cease in a measure to hear the howl and wail against ticket speculators and box office overcharge.

As each season passes, Mr. Drew gives added evidence that, in the matter of handling light comedy, he deserves a very considerable estimate in the summing up of the relative talents that are and have been presented to us on our native stage. His play at present is "A SINGLE MAN," from the pen of

Hubert Henry Davies, author of "Cousin Kate" and "The Mollusc." Although as unruffling as the public speech of the average Socialist, as tranquil as a Franco-Prussian war scare and as obvious from the moment the curtain rises as a novel by George Barr McCutcheon, the effort is serenely stimulating, never possessed of disinterest and leaves one unquestionably with what so many otherwise decent people call "a pleasant taste in the mouth." Generally speaking, the play is of the plot caliber of "Smith," the Maugham comedy in which Mr. Drew played last year. In "Smith," a man, tiring of the female social shams surrounding him, took refuge in the arms of an honest, clean-minded servant. In "A SINGLE MAN," a man, tiring of effervescing, over-active young womanhood, seeks marital calm and solace in the person of a sober, sensible stenographer. It is a droll idea, really, as Davies works it out, but it occurs to the philosophically inclined critic that little Maggie Cottrell (the youth-filled animal) would have made a mightily serviceable and inviting mate for Robin Worthington—and a not less efficient one than the stenographer—after a soothing half-year of married life. But, of course, as they say in Toledo, Ohio, "in that case we shouldn't have had any play." The author of the presentation makes use of one playwrighting device that I feel bound by duty to chide. It has become so common a trick among the more uninventive, unimaginative dramatists that someone must call a halt. I refer to the dramatist's use of a bottle of champagne when he arrives at a point in his play where his leading characters begin to baffle him, where he cannot reasonably and logically contrive and assemble their emotions toward his dramatic ends and where, accordingly, he has to call upon a few glasses of liquor to make them sufficiently foolish to act in any old way. This ubiquitous substitution of champagne for logic, of semi-soups for dialectical emotions and thoughts, is becoming a wee bit tiresome. Of Mr. Drew's supporting company Miss Carroll McComas, as the

young girl, merits first mention. Miss Mary Boland's portrayal of the stenographer is—Mary Boland.

It seems to me that the greatest difficulty that so-called female impersonators experience is less the accurate impersonating of women than the convincing impersonating of men. And thus it comes that the reviewer, when called upon to diagnose their cases, feels more like indulging in a slap on the wrist than in criticism. Critics, however, must be fair always—even when it is painful—which is why some persons constantly protest that critics are biased. Two of these impersonators have appeared recently on the metropolitan stage, Bothwell Browne in "MISS JACK" and Julian Eltinge in "THE FASCINATING WIDOW." Of the two, a neuralgic honesty compels the chronicler that the vastly more unpalatable of the two—Browne—is much the better in the pure matter of delineating the silk-lisle manner and gartered air of the female gender. Eltinge, in his endeavor to eradicate a too Bothwellian impression of effeminacy in his characterizations, defeats his own theatrical reason-to-be by periodic injections into his impersonations of a swinging stride, the making of a fist, the pulling at a pipe, the using of a "damn" and other similar actions that are supposed to indicate manliness. And accordingly, because of the very fact that he is the less valid impersonator of the two, Eltinge becomes the much more agreeable figure. Of the hermaphroditic music shows in which these female impersonators perform, little need be written. Suffice it to say that there undoubtedly live persons who find enjoyment therein.

"SPEED," a comedy employing as its theme the current mad passion for the possession of an automobile, devised by Lee Wilson Dodd, has been visiting us during the month. Although the little play has won considerable praise from the newspaper critical fraternity, I find upon looking into my heart that I cannot lend my cheers to the lithographed billboard pæans. A certain freshness and reportorial nativeness inhere to the effort, but aside from these commend-

able features the disposition of the ware is so raw, so repetitious and so unnecessarily commonplace in manners and dramatic deportment that the final impression taken away from the theater by the spectator is that of another good idea gone wrong. Given the theme, the reader may imagine the execution without undue strain upon his trousers: Family of moderate means, automobile, automo-bill, mortgage, tears, sudden news of sixty thousand dollars made in Wall Street (now you stop laughing!) more automobile, curtain. Of the presenting company, a newcomer, Miss Elise Scott, does the best work in the role of a motor crank. Miss Oza Wal-drop as usual assists admirably in making the presentation fatiguing.

So few theatergoers coveted "TRY NEIGHBOR'S WIFE," produced by Daniel Frohman, that the piece was quickly withdrawn. I deem it benevolent, nevertheless, to devote a paragraph to the effort in order that I may point out to Mr. Elmer Harris, its author, just why his play failed. Mr. Harris treated of two men, each of whom believed that the other's wife was better suited to him than his own, and of their mutual agreement to exchange spouses for a trial period in order to determine whether or no their respective beliefs were correct. Mr. Harris forthwith effected the change, established a novel premise, got his audience worked up, dropped his curtain a few minutes to permit the orchestra chairs to learn via their programs that a week was supposed to elapse between the acts and thus to keep them in a risqué quiver of suspense, raised his curtain, disclosed a naughty boudoir setting, and then had one of the husbands come down to the footlights right off the bat and say that he had been compelled to sleep on a couch downstairs all the time! And of course the play found itself immediately in the same position as Moses found himself when the lights went out. The reason, therefore, that Mr. Harris's play failed was because Mr. Harris did not happen to be born in France. I desire in passing to record an excellent performance in this play by Mr. Arthur Byron.

Curiously enough, the one quality that has drawn the loudest opprobrium in Charles Klein's most recent very bad and very popular play, "MAGGIE PEPPER," is the only laudable thing about it. I speak of *arma virumque*, of pistols and the hero, of guns and the villain—in short, of droll melodrama. This element of melodrama, with its smashing of window glass and the dramatic unities, while as plain as the nose on the face of Bergerac and as patent as patent leather in the summertime, is at least proportionately frank. It pretends to nothing that it is not, which is a great deal more than may be said for the rest of this and some of the other Klein proscenium essays. A Klein play would really not be half so bad as, for instance, Comrade Mencken believes it always is, if it were presented on a side street. The trouble with the majority of the plays of this writer is that—at the express desire of the writer—they are criticized from the standpoint of the main thoroughfare. Viewing them from a corner of Third Avenue, Klein plays are grand classics, but naturally that opinion diminishes somewhat—somewhat—somewhat when the opera glass is trained on them from Broadway. Locality looms as large in criticism as in real estate or the question of appendicitis pains. Maggie Pepper, as the role is played by Rose Stahl, is a fairly strong woman; but "MAGGIE PEPPER," as conceived by Charles Klein, is a pretty weak sister. For even an equitable proportion of sound merit in the average Klein play one should be only too willing to deliver thanks, but to pretend to do so honestly in the instance of this latest oblation would be to strain the quality of merci.

If you, in your vagrant saunterings down the unlighted byways, have ever met with some stray, slim, simple, relatively negative, reluctant little woman, a woman who didn't know Nietzsche from Elbert Hubbard or Massenet from Karl Hoschna, but who knew that roses were wonderful, that the sun and stars were made of gold and silver and that it was hell to be poor; if you, in your wanderings, ever gave such

a woman your impersonal hand and bought her a great big cheese sandwich and a large pot of hot coffee out of your faded finances when her body was cold and hungry; if you ever saw the smile come into her face and the gladness and peace come into her soul as the meager food and drink came into her stomach; and if you went back home after that and treated yourself to a grin of clean, decent satisfaction in front of your dressing mirror—if ever you have received such a sensation, you will be able to appreciate far better than further type can tell you just the sort of feeling one takes away with him from Haddon Chambers's latest play, "PASSERS-BY." Like the girl of the tributary thoroughfares, we find here a play of slender physique, of small information as information is critically regarded, of negative dramatic stomach, but nonetheless a play that makes the world seem the more worth while for having seen it. I might go on for three pages pointing out the flaws in this Chambers product. I might tell you in a wise way that its theme and intrinsic execution are quite the same as that employed several years ago by Avery Hopwood in "This Woman and This Man" and by half a hundred playwrights before him; I might sagely assure you that it is "talky," that it is assisted by the "long arm of coincidence," that its devices are shopworn and even primitively mediocre. I could do all this and more. But I do not care to do so. "PASSERS-BY" has all the faults of "The Passing of the Third Floor Back," which it approximates in character, and all the virtues. It preaches generosity, humanness and love, and while it is preaching it does not pass around a collection plate and injure one's sense of patience. The story it tells is simply the story of Peter Waverton, a bachelor, who calls into his rooms in Piccadilly during a thick fog various pavement derelicts and who comes to see the heart in each of them. Through his adventures with these passers-by runs the current of his returning love for the outcast girl whom he seduced in other days, of his first meeting with the magnificent youngster that

was born to them and of his taking the forlorn twain back into his life. Trite, banal, bathetic—all the dear old favorite adjectives you wish to apply to it—but the power is there in its vest pocket just the same. To see the youngster's mother look at him through her glorious tears as he reaches out his understanding hand to tattered Samuel Burns, the piece of embankment driftwood, and to hear her pride-bursting voice: "My boy knows when to smile!"—to cite but a single instance—is to be forced into the realization that even a heart that has lived in New York for many years may still be capable of other functions than the mere pumping of blood. And to hear Waverton's comprehending fiancée's: "Yes, I suppose you love me as much as men love the women they marry, but—"; to feel the warm benevolence of Nighty, the cab driver; to grasp the supreme content of the half-starved, miserable wayfarer Burns—is to come to the appreciation that headaches and rheumatism and financial distress and great disappointments are the littlest, most insignificant things in this wide, life-quivering world. Of the presenting company, Julian Royce, A. G. Andrews, Ernest Lawford, Louise Rutter, Ivy Hertzog and Rosalie Toller are delight-giving to the eye, the ear and the mind. Charles Frohman's production, with its rare electroliers that actually light up immediately when a button is pressed on the stage instead of remaining dormant for several moments until the switchboard fellow off in the wings has finished blowing his nose, merits its individual sentence of approbation.

Whenever one makes bold to mention the subject of "types" in connection with modern drama and its interpretation, the sort of men who order a steak with hashed brown potatoes in cream when they invite a lady out to dine get red in the face and begin to call one names. The present day hunt for "types," they vociferate, is a menace to good acting, as it is an ultimate ruination of good plays. This "type business" is a fad, an artificial device to catch the eye and beguile the brain, a

piece of periphrastic theatrical clatter, an elegant little souvenir of steadily amassing up-to-date dramatic buncombe! Whenever I hear such protestations, I feel sure that the observing person who is responsible for them is precisely the kind of individual who, if he visited Russia, would find that the thing which impressed him most was the fluency with which the natives spoke the language, or who, if he read a book by David Graham Phillips, would bet his neighbor a week later that it was written by a fellow named Wenzell.

At the premier performance of Thompson Buchanan's play "THE RACK," I found myself wishing with all my inner man that the boxes had been placed at the disposal of some of these type objectors. For if ever the ingrained effectiveness of a play was eaten into by absence of "type" in the instance of its central figure, "THE RACK" was that play. The leading character in the drama was an unsophisticated girl of a wife, who plunged herself into difficulties by force of her very weakness, helplessness, inexperience and innocence. For the enactment of this role there was selected an actress of mature years and figure, of developed physical strength and of a generally irresistible I-can-take-care-of-myself-anywhere aspect. Accordingly, when this woman (who perforce changed the entire mold of the written character) permitted the bad man of the play to whisper devilish words into her ear, pretended not to understand and forthwith pursued her way in his wake with an evelynnesbit of a baby look and an open-eyed air of guilelessness, it was all one could do to prevent himself from getting on his feet and saying "Goo-goo" in the direction of the stage. All the art on earth cannot make a young girl out of a woman beyond middle age, nor can it deceive an audience's eyes and emotions. "THE RACK" otherwise was an interesting, if uneven, melodrama that led up to a rousing, climacteric courtroom cross-examination scene full of vibrant, coursing plot, counterplot, thrill and heart thrust. Intended by its author as nothing more profound than it displayed

itself to be, the melodrama must be accepted as blunt melodrama and reviewed as such. I have watched Mr. Buchanan's work closely since he first turned his pen toward the footlights, and from personal contact it has been given me to look into his methods and processes of dramatic thought. If, mayhap, his *métier* remains comedy, it seems to me that he deserves an allotment of credit for his courage in invading a dramatic meadow that has been found to contain a hiding bull for many playwrights much older than he. There will be found in every community individuals who still believe a shoemaker should stick to his last, in spite of the fact that only yesterday a shoemaker was being cheered on toward the governorship of one of the great States of the Union by a million fellow countrymen. Such persons will undoubtedly censure Mr. Buchanan for not sticking to the teacup and gold-tipped cigarette. But they are of the class who are still voting for Bryan, still reading Ouida, still talking about the old Empire Stock Company, still raving over the music of Paul Dresser and still wearing suspenders. "THE RACK," whatever its dramatic sins may have been, matched thrill for fault. Inasmuch as it was admitted melodrama, why go further? Mr. Conway Tearle's performance in the exhibit must have its word of praise.

David Belasco's stanchest admirers are really his worst enemies. They flock to each new dramatic production that he makes and sit through the presentation enthralled by a play of variable quality made emphatically and definitely compelling by virtue of his deft artistry, by a corps of interpreters trained by him into remembering that each is being paid for acting rather than posing for some pretty girls in the lower left hand box, by a proscenium exhibit welded into a suave whole through his very positive sense of discrimination. And then when the final curtain falls they pile out into the lobby jabbering ecstatically over an insignificant table lamp in the second act that threw an equally insignificant light against a window panel. They see the light and they don't see the

light. They elect to dance a mental can-can over some unimportant "detail" and forget the fact that these same "details" are less responsible actually for the remarkable success of the Belasco productions than is anything else in them. Thus is Belasco being constantly robbed by his friends of the credit due him. It is to be feared that at this rate he will never receive his just award until he puts on a play in the Ben Greet fashion. "THE WOMAN," from the head of W. C. DeMille, is the most recent exhibit in the Belasco studio. Narrating the tale of an insurgent member of Congress who fights against the graft gang, and who is determined to win that fight even if he has to ruin a woman's life to accomplish his end, the performance is thoroughly delectable from beginning to close. The cast, including John Cope, Cuyler Hastings and Mary Nash, is an excellent one, although Miss Nash is to be warned for the sake of her own probable originality and worth against her suspicious, though understandable, tendency to duplicate the facial expressions and dramatic deportment of the individualistic Miss Helen War: who created the role of the telephone operator when the play was tried out last season.

"A MAN OF HONOR," by an obscure gentleman named Landman, was loudly applauded every night during its run by the ushers, ice water boy, author, friends of the actors and house management at Weber's Theater. This, dear children, proves that Cæsar rang the bell on the question of tastes, that it takes all sorts of people to make a world, that a fine display of courage is to be admired, that anybody can write a "play," and that a little vaseline rubbed on the palms of the hands each night before retiring will prevent them from becoming blistered even after a violent and protracted period of exertion.

"WHAT THE DOCTOR ORDERED," a comedy by A. E. Thomas, the story of which I told you several months ago, suffers chiefly from the ardent and ceaseless love its author evidently made during its preparation to the now old-fashioned constructive scheme of parallels,

balancing episodes and forced contrasts followed out in the plays of Molière. This foolish adherence to the Molière method is one of the leading obstructions that some of our younger native playwrights have placed in their own paths. The Thomas comedy suffers also from its selection of a theme that, in the advance prints, harked promising. In the theater, however, two hours or more of an irritable man and an irritable wife proved to be somewhat less provocative of pleasure than, for instance, watching the squad of pretty little virgins who trip in and out of "THE KISS WALTZ." The latter is the new Casino music show. Like all other productions of similar caliber, its principal features reveal themselves to be the interior of a palace situated somewhere in the Black Hand belt, a passionate waltz during which the leading man does everything to the leading lady but bite her, and a comedian who reiterates every three minutes something to the effect that his stomach craves food and drink. The Casino exhibit, however, is nicely staged, attractively costumed and sufficiently tuneful to merit its dividend of popular attention. "THE LITTLE MILLIONAIRE," the tune play in which George M. Cohan is remaking his public appearance, with its Star Spangled Bannerisms, its amusing self-assurance and general cockiness, may be labeled by a certain element among us as being another case of "when the ego screams," but, like all the rest of the Cohan shows, it displays the very positive genius (yes, *I said genius*) of the young man who created it. To see, appreciate and proclaim the peculiar and uncommon capacity of George Cohan has for many years been regarded as a form of critical high treason among that small remaining group of theatrical commentators that fears it will be taken as "unliterary" and unscholarly if it says good of anything or anybody not indorsed by grandpa and grandma, college professors and other conservative old-timers. But this group is being diminished year by year, partly by death, to be sure, for the old guard never surrenders, but more so by honesty, common sense and dyspepsia tablets.

A NOVEL OF THE FIRST RANK

By H. L. Mencken

IF you miss reading "JENNIE GERHARDT," by Theodore Dreiser (*Harpers*), you will miss the best American novel, all things considered, that has reached the book counters in a dozen years. On second thought, change "a dozen" into "twenty-five." On third thought, strike out everything after "counters." On fourth thought, strike out everything after "novel." Why back and fill? Why evade and qualify? Hot from it, I am firmly convinced that "JENNIE GERHARDT" is the best American novel I have ever read, with the lonesome but Himalayan exception of "Huckleberry Finn," and so I may as well say it aloud and at once and have done with it. Am I forgetting "The Scarlet Letter," "The Rise of Silas Lapham" and (to drag an exile unwillingly home) "What Maisie Knew"? I am not. Am I forgetting "McTeague" and "The Pit"? I am not. Am I forgetting the stupendous masterpieces of James Fenimore Cooper, beloved of the pedagogues, or those of James Lane Allen, Mrs. Wharton and Dr. S. Weir Mitchell, beloved of the women's clubs and literary monthlies? No. Or "Uncle Tom's Cabin" or "Rob o' the Bowl" or "Gates Ajar" or "Ben Hur" or "David Harum" or "Lewis Rand" or "Richard Carvel"? No. Or "The Hungry Heart" or Mr. Dreiser's own "Sister Carrie"? No. I have all these good and bad books in mind. I have read them and survived them and in many cases enjoyed them.

And yet in the face of them, and in the face of all the high authority, constituted and self-constituted, behind them, it seems to me at this moment that "JENNIE GERHARDT" stands apart from

all of them, and a bit above them. It lacks the grace of this one, the humor of that one, the perfect form of some other one; but taking it as it stands, grim, gaunt, mirthless, shapeless, it remains, and by long odds, the most impressive work of art that we have yet to show in prose fiction—a tale not unrelated, in its stark simplicity, its profound sincerity, to "Germinal" and "Anna Karenina" and "Lord Jim"—a tale assertively American in its scene and its human material, and yet so European in its method, its point of view, its almost reverential seriousness, that one can scarcely imagine an American writing it. Its personages are few in number, and their progress is along a path that seldom widens, but the effect of that progress is ever one of large movements and large masses. One senses constantly the group behind the individual, the natural law behind the human act. The result is an indefinable impression of bigness, of epic dignity. The thing is not a mere story, not a novel in the ordinary American meaning of the word, but a criticism and an interpretation of life—and that interpretation loses nothing in validity by the fact that its burden is the doctrine that life is meaningless, a tragedy without a moral, a joke without a point. What else have Moore and Conrad and Hardy been telling us these many years? What else does all the new knowledge of a century teach us? One by one the old ready answers have been disposed of. Today the one intelligible answer to the riddle of aspiration and sacrifice is that there is no answer at all.

"The power to tell the same story in two forms," said George Moore not long

ago, "is the sign of the true artist." You will think of this when you read "JENNIE GERHARDT," for in its objective plan, and even in its scheme of subjective unfolding, it suggests "Sister Carrie" at every turn. Reduce it to a hundred words, and those same words would also describe that earlier study of a woman's soul, with scarcely the change of a syllable. Jennie Gerhardt, like Carrie Meeber, is a rose grown from turnip seed. Over each, at the start, hangs poverty, ignorance, the dumb helplessness of the Shudra—and yet in each there is that indescribable something, that element of essential gentleness, that innate, inward beauty which levels all caste barriers and makes Esther a fit queen for Ahasuerus. And the history of each, reduced to its elements, is the history of the other. Jennie, like Carrie, escapes from the physical miseries of the struggle for existence only to taste the worse miseries of the struggle for happiness. Not, of course, that we have in either case a moral, maudlin fable of virtue's fall; Mr. Dreiser, I need scarcely assure you, is too dignified an artist, too sane a man, for any such banality. Seduction, in point of fact, is not all tragedy for either Jennie or Carrie. The gain of each, until the actual event has been left behind and obliterated by experiences more salient and poignant, is rather greater than her loss, and that gain is to the soul as well as to the creature. With the rise from want to security, from fear to ease, comes an awakening of the finer perceptions, a widening of the sympathies, a gradual unfolding of the delicate flower called personality, an increased capacity for loving and living. But with all this, and as a part of it, there comes, too, an increased capacity for suffering—and so in the end, when love slips away and the empty years stretch before, it is the awakened and supersentient woman that pays for the folly of the groping, bewildered girl. The tragedy of Carrie and Jennie, in brief, is not that they are degraded but that they are lifted up, not that they go to the gutter but that they escape the gutter.

But if the two stories are thus varia-

tions upon the same somber theme, if each starts from the same place and arrives at the same dark goal, if each shows a woman heartened by the same hopes and tortured by the same agonies, there is still a vast difference between them, and that difference is the measure of the author's progress in his art. "Sister Carrie" was a first sketch, a rough piling-up of observations and impressions, disordered and often incoherent. In the midst of the story of Carrie, Mr. Dreiser paused to tell the story of Hurstwood—an astonishingly vivid and tragic story, true enough, but still one that broke the back of the other. In "JENNIE GERHARDT" he falls into no such overelaboration of episode. His narrative goes forward steadily from beginning to end. Episodes there are, of course, but they keep their proper place, their proper bulk. It is always Jennie that holds the attention; it is in Jennie's soul that every scene is ultimately played out. Her father and mother, Senator Brander the god of her first worship, her daughter Vesta and Lester Kane, the man who makes and mars her—all these are drawn with infinite painstaking, and in every one of them there is the blood of life. But it is Jennie that dominates the drama from curtain to curtain. Not an event is unrelated to her; not a climax fails to make clearer the struggles going on in her mind and heart.

I have spoken of reducing "JENNIE GERHARDT" to a hundred words. The thing, I fancy, might be actually done. The machinery of the tale is not complex; it has no plot, as plots are understood in these days of "mystery" stories; no puzzles madden the reader. It is dull, unromantic poverty that sends Jennie into the world. Brander finds her there, lightly seduces her, and then discovers that, for some strange gentleness within her, he loves her. Lunacy—but he is willing to face it out. Death, however, steps in; Brander, stricken down without warning, leaves Jennie homeless and a mother. Now enters Lester Kane—not the villain of the books, but a normal, decent, cleanly American of the better class, well to do,

level-headed, not too introspective, eager for the sweets of life. He and Jennie are drawn together; if love is not all of the spirit, then it is love that binds them. For half a dozen years the world lets them alone. A certain grave respectability settles over their relation; if they are not actually married, then it is only because marriage is a mere formality, to be put off until tomorrow. But bit by bit they are dragged into the light. Kane's father, dying with millions, gives him two years to put Jennie away. The penalty is poverty; the reward is wealth—and not only wealth itself, but all the pleasant and well remembered things that will come with it: the lost friends of other days, a sense of dignity and importance, an end of apologies and evasions, good society, the comradeship of decent women—particularly the comradeship of one decent woman. Kane hesitates, makes a brave defiance, thinks it over—and finally yields. Jennie does not flood him with tears. She has made progress in the world, has Jennie; the simple faith of the girl has given way to the pride and poise of the woman. Five years later Kane sends for her. He is dying. When it is over, Jennie goes back to her lonely home, and there, like Carrie Meeber before her, she faces the long years with dry eyes and an empty heart. "Days and days in endless reiteration, and then—"

A moral tale? Not at all. It has no more moral than a string quartet or the first book of Euclid. But a philosophy of life is in it, and that philosophy is the same profound pessimism which gives a dark color to the best that we have from Hardy, Moore, Zola and the great Russians—the pessimism of disillusion—not the jejune, Byronic thing, not the green sickness of youth, but that pessimism which comes with the discovery that the riddle of life, despite all the fine solutions offered by the learned doctors, is essentially insoluble. One can discern no intelligible sequence of cause and effect in the agonies of Jennie Gerhardt. She is, as human beings go, of the nobler, finer metal. There is within her a great capacity for service, a great capacity for

love, a great capacity for happiness. And yet all that life has to offer her, in the end, is the mere license to live. The days stretch before her "in endless reiteration." She is a prisoner doomed to perpetual punishment for some fanciful, incomprehensible crime against the gods who make their mirthless sport of us all. And to me, at least, she is more tragic thus than Lear on his wild heath or Prometheus on his rock.

Nothing of the art of the literary lapidary is visible in this novel. Its form is the simple one of a panorama unrolled. Its style is unstudied to the verge of barrenness. There is no painful groping for the exquisite, inevitable word; Mr. Dreiser seems content to use the common, even the commonplace coin of speech. On the very first page one encounters "frank, open countenance," "diffident manner," "helpless poor," "untutored mind," "honest necessity" and half a dozen other such ancients. And yet in the long run it is this very *naïveté* which gives the story much of its impressiveness. The narrative, in places, has the effect of a series of unisons in music—an effect which, given a solemn theme, vastly exceeds that of the most ornate polyphony. One cannot imagine "JENNIE GERHARDT" done in the gipsy phrases of Meredith, the fugual manner of James. One cannot imagine that stark, stenographic dialogue adorned with the brilliants of speech. The thing could have been done only in the way that it has been done. As it stands, it is a work of art from which I for one would not care to take anything away—not even its gross crudities, its incessant returns to C major. It is a novel that depicts the life we Americans are living with extreme accuracy and criticises that life with extraordinary insight. It is a novel, I am convinced, of the very first consideration.

After the Fifth Symphony—or any other of the nine, for that matter—it is not easy to listen to a Chopin nocturne, and after Mr. Dreiser's story, by the same token, you will not find it easy to read the common novels of the month. For example, "KENNEDY SQUARE," by the protean and facile F. Hopkinson

Smith (*Scribner*). The tale here is one of young love, and the sugar drips from it like Spanish moss from a bayou cypress. Young Harry Rutter, in love with Kate Seymour, puts a bullet into Langdon Willits for insulting her and is turned out of the house by his stern papa for his pains. A harsh old laird is Col. Talbot Rutter, of Moorlands. Kate is harsh, too, for she affects to be outraged by Harry's act; and so in despair he rushes off to South America, and there raises a large black beard. When he returns, three years later, that beard so well disguises him that he is turned out of Moorlands again. But halt; we are already on page 403 and it is time to have done. So the old laird relents, Kate relents, Harry shaves and the curtain falls.

Namby-pamby, archaic stuff, without the slightest excuse for existence. Romance may be made delightful, even to adult males, as Mr. Locke and his followers have shown, but to make it so requires ingenuity and wit, both of which are missing from Mr. Smith's saccharine story. The scene is laid in the Baltimore of the forties, and Edgar Allan Poe, far gone in liquor, is dragged in by the heels. The authenticity of the local color may be gauged from the fact that a Baltimore darkey is made to pronounce Anne Arundel "Ann'rundel." What the mokes of the Chesapeake city actually say is "Ann'ran'l"—and so notorious and insidious is that pronunciation that most of the white Baltimoreans have borrowed it. A trivial detail, of course, but in a book which shows an utter lack of large merits, one may be pardoned, perhaps, for seeking small ones, and for calling attention to it when they are not found.

"HER LITTLE YOUNG LADYSHIP," by the late Myra Kelly MacNaughtan (*Scribner*), is another exceedingly frail reed of fiction. Mrs. MacNaughtan, in her too brief day, sent forth many a humorous and incisive study of childlife among the exotic barbarians who now dwell among us, but here she is venturing upon a polite romance in the best seller manner, with an English earl for hero and a beautiful American girl for hero-

ine. It starts off gaily and humanly enough, but before the scene shifts across the water the characters stiffen into conventional dummies and the incidents sink to commonplace melodrama. No doubt the thing was done with pathetically failing powers. Let us remember Mrs. MacNaughtan for the sounder work of her happier years. "SUCH A WOMAN," by Owen and Leita Kildare (*Dillingham*), goes to pieces in the same fashion. The earlier chapters, for all their squalor, yet have evident truth and sincerity in them. Blackwell's Island and Fleming's saloon are made real to us, and Mary O'Connor, drunken and degraded, is made real, too. But later on, when Mary becomes a prize exhibit of the missions and the Rev. Ervin Stoddard seeks her hand in holy marriage—then the thing ceases to enchant. Mr. Kildare, it appears, died before the book was completed, and his wife undertook to finish it. A laudable enterprise, but one in which good intentions could not take the place of actual skill.

"THE SECRET GARDEN," by Frances Hodgson Burnett (*Stokes*); "MOTHER CAREY'S CHICKENS," by Kate Douglas Wiggin (*Houghton-Mifflin*), and "THE STORY GIRL," by L. M. Montgomery (*Page*), are three very good books to give at Christmas to the young ladies of your Bible class. Each steers clear of the physiological problems of a corrupt civilization; each deals chiefly with jolly children, and each depicts the world in the agreeable but unusual process of growing better. Of the three, the most delicate and artistic perhaps is Mrs. Burnett's—a tale of childhood which falls between "A Little Princess" and "Little Lord Fauntleroy"—one which passes over into unreality more than once but always in reality's guise. Mrs. Burnett manages that sort of business with considerable skill; she can tell a pretty story as few other fictioneers of our day can tell it. The other two books also show no little craftsmanship. In brief, a trio not to be despised, particularly with Christmas approaching and the search beginning for suitable gifts for those sweet girls who are too old for

the Elsie books and yet not old enough for "Trilby." At the opposite pole is "OTHER LAWS," by John Parkinson (*Lane*), a sad, sad English tale in the "Dodo" manner, with a hero who goes out to Africa and is reported dead and a heroine who thereupon projects herself into the arms of a needy journalist. A hiatus. Now comes the hero back, alive and dismayed. But not for long. Those that love hath joined together, let no mere husband put asunder! She places her hands "on either of his cheeks," and slowly drawing her face toward him, kisses him softly on the lips. "With you, dear," she says. "Anywhere, anything, with you!" Mr. Parkinson writes suavely and entertainingly, but I am unable to report that he has anything to say.

"A PRAIRIE COURTSHIP" (*Stokes*) is another of Harold Bindloss's workmanlike tales of the Canadian Northwest. Mr. Bindloss writes too many of them to linger long over any one of them, and the consequence is that all are more remarkable for their fluency than for their actual substance, but if you like a conventional romance, with a gipsy hero who finds love the answer to all the world riddles and a brave little heroine who dares life and the wilderness alone, then you will not lament the five shillings you pay for this one. "A TEXAS RANGER," by William MacLeod Raine (*Dillingham*), is a rip-snorting yarn of the wild, wild Southwest, with enough hold-ups and other desperate encounters in it to make a moving picture film one thousand two hundred feet long. "DON SAGASTO'S DAUGHTER," by Paul H. Blades (*Badger*), is a dull but painstaking story of Southern California in the days before the Yankee invasion, with intimate glimpses of the ancient Spanish lords of the soil. "A KNIGHT OF THE GOLDEN CIRCLE," by U. S. Lesh (*Badger*), is a chronicle of Confederate plotting in Indiana in the closing days of the Civil War. Earnest, but far from enthralling.

Blithe writing is the grace that makes "SECRETARY OF FRIVOLOUS AFFAIRS," by May Futrelle (*Bobbs-Merrill*), stand out from the dull desert of current fic-

tion. The story that Mrs. Futrelle has to tell is almost as much old as new. We scarred and maimed novel readers know the social secretary; we know the sturdy young son-of-the-house who falls in love with her; we know the talcumed and bedizened kidnaper, and we know the bogus French count—but here we have those venerable comedians in new gauds and at new tricks and with the October wine of a second youth in their veins. Mrs. Futrelle has a sense of humor, and she has, too, the dramatic sense. Modest in plan and purpose her story may be, but in execution it shows many a lively virtue. The same excellences mark "AVERAGE JONES," by Samuel Hopkins Adams (*Bobbs-Merrill*), a sequence of ten detective stories. Jones (who labors under the depressing given names of Adrian Van Reyepen Egerton) is a sleuth of the Holmes school, logical and scientific, and so his feats do not startle the seasoned connoisseur of such doings, but Mr. Adams describes them so well that there is no resisting them. Altogether, a book which rises much above its class.

A few more novels and we are done with them. "TO LOVE AND TO CHERISH," by Eliza Calvert Hall (*Little-Brown*), introduces us to a Kentucky politician who declines the governorship because he fears that his simple mountain wife will be cruelly embarrassed by the elaborate ceremonial of the Blue Grass court. The author has been praised by Colonel Roosevelt. "MARY," by Winifred Graham (*Kennerley*), has a heroine whose goodness and loveliness suggest to many simple folk that she is the Mother of Christ come back to earth again—a somewhat difficult story to manage with due decorum, and one which Miss Graham does not help by making Mary Aquila a disputative theologian. "THE ROSE DOOR," by Estelle Baker (*Kerr*), is an extremely depressing study of prostitution in San Francisco. "PHYLLIS IN MIDDLEWYCH," by Margaret Westrup (*Lane*), is a series of chapters from the life and adventures of Phyllis Cartwright, a ten-year-old in an English village, with sundry and amusing sidelights upon certain older

folk. Tempo: *Allegretto*. "THE YELLOW LETTER," by William Johnston (*Bobbs-Merrill*), is a tale of mystery. "ROSE OF OLD HARPETH," by Maria Thompson Daviess (*Bobbs-Merrill*), is a sentimental pastoral. "MISS BILLY," by Eleanor H. Porter (*Page*), is the gay story of a country girl who elects herself ward of three Boston bachelors—with the inevitable finale by MM. Mendelssohn and Wagner.

Forty-two years ago a longing to eat engaged John Muir and there was no responsive jingle of legal tender in his pantaloons, so he fell gladly upon the proposal of one Mr. Delaney, a California sheepowner, that he accompany a flock of Delaney sheep to the upland pastures of the Sierra, not to watch the sheep but to watch the shepherd. A romantic hike through deep forests, over foaming mountain streams and up a score of flowery valleys—and now, after a lifetime, comes the record of it, in "MY FIRST SUMMER IN THE SIERRA," (*Houghton-Mifflin*), a book simply and charmingly written, and one full of the glow of outdoors. Mr. Muir was thirty-one years old at that time, and his chief journeys, including that which put the Muir Glacier upon the map of Alaska, were still ahead of him. Today, at seventy-three, he is a noble survivor of an earlier and more spacious day. You will like his story. Not a bird or tree or flower escaped his eager eye; but it is not a dull catalogue that he now offers, but rather the lively journal of a happy, springtime adventure.

The appellation of "PASSION LYRICS," which Maurine Hathaway, "the poetess of the pines," bestows upon her new collection of strophes (*Parker*), gives promise of an agreeable devilishness within, but what one actually finds there is the harmless doggerel of a high-school girl. More honestly diabolical is Henry Percival Spencer, whose highly alkaline ballads, songs and epigrams bear the label of "A RAPE OF HALLOW'E'EN" (*Badger*). A good book to send

(anonymously) to your pastor, or to some other poor fellow whose healthy human appetite for impropriety cannot be satisfied publicly without scandal. There are some trivial things among the "SONGS" of Cy Warman (*Avery*), but there are also a number of graceful and melodious compositions in the little book—enough, indeed, to give good excuse for printing it. A more rigid editing, preferably by some cold-blooded stranger, would have improved "LIGHTS AND SHADOWS," by Hayden Sands (*De Mille*). Some of these songs have considerable beauty, but much inept stuff, apparently from the author's nonage, crowds upon them, and so the average of quality falls. Yet that average is still high enough to insure Mr. Sands a respectful hearing. The trouble with Louis How, whose "LYRICS AND SONGS" (*Sherman-French*) comes next, is that he is careless of rhythm. Over and over again a harsh, staccato line breaks the back of what would be otherwise a pretty little song. Say that suavity is in "THE QUEEN OF ORPLEDE," by Charles Wharton Stork (*Lippincott*), and you have said all. Mr. Stork writes excellent verse, but its emotions are seldom warm enough to give it the character of true poetry. "MOTHER'S LOVE SONGS," by Elizabeth Toldridge (*Badger*), suffers from monotony of theme, for every song celebrates a daughter's love for her mother, but here and there a fine line keeps one reading on. The "SONGS" of Florence Isabel Chauncey, the "POEMS" of Lillie Rosalie Ripley, the "RHYMES OF THE CITY OF ROSES" of T. B. Shartle, the "EGYPTIAN MELODIES" of Alfred J. Hough and the "OSIRUS" of Joseph J. Coughlin (all *Badger*) are dull, dismal and amateurish. The "LYRICS FROM LOTUS LANDS" of Florence Land May and the "POEMS" of C. E. d'Arnoix (both *Badger*) are frankly atrocious. Which brings us, bloody but unbowed, to the end of the poets and their poetizing.



THE TRUNK IN THE ATTIC

A Plea for the Revival of the Obsolescent Art of Letter Writing

By Louise Closser Hale

READING the published letters of other people is a sort of licensed robbing of the mails and an honorable peeping through the windows when the shades are drawn. Both of these pursuits so savor of wrongdoing that they are highly delectable.

Is it not unfortunate, then, that this generation will leave to the world only machine-made chronicles of our doings? And how dolorous to find that all of it is due to stress of the times and the prudence of man! Ah, I fear we have raised caution to a high art! "Never write a letter and never destroy one," is our maxim. And we neither give nor get.

One enters an office to find a captain of industry alone yet gibbering into a metal contrivance which, somewhere else in the building, is resolving itself into a definite typewritten offer to take a young lady to the theater. There is not even the stimulus of a pretty stenographer to remind him that he is talking to a woman through a woman. Should the affair of the heart continue, and the man of business become so impassioned that he cannot limit himself to this latest invention, he writes a night telegram, and endeavors to appear unconcerned while an expressionless youth behind the counter drones out the missive, and in a voice suddenly distinct asks if that last word is "love" or "dove."

Someone recently claimed that there are as many interesting letters in the mail sacks now as there were when post horses galloped across the country, but it generally takes a century to find this out; and in the meantime the family who cherished them will move each May,

and each May a few more letters will be left behind with the flat cat.

Flats themselves are not conducive to the art of correspondence. There is no place to write letters and no space to hide them. Even Robert and Elizabeth Browning, had they lived in apartments, would have felt the janitorial discouragement in overproduction along any line. The ponderous tomes containing their letters are before me now—twelve hundred pages of missives written in one year, and they saw each other daily! Many have questioned the son's good taste in the publishing of this mass of intimate interchange of thought, yet the volumes stand for an enduring love which a slenderer output would have made less emphatic.

Slipping through the pages gives rise to many thoughts. I am reimpresed with what infinite pains they minutely discussed their ailments. It is a gratifying disclosure, for in this the Brownings were no better than are the rest of us—and a little bit worse. We are mightily troubled in our letters contemplating matrimony over what might happen to the beloved before the ceremony. After marriage the concern lessens: colds are no longer consumption, and can be dismissed in a postscript; an inclination to harp on one's sickly condition invites the cry of hypochondriac from the other welded link; and the suggestion that one will consult a new physician brings a special delivery letter touching on expenses.

Robert and Elizabeth wrote no letters to each other after marriage, for there was no separation. That there was no

parting would intimate that they still bore with each other's indispositions and all the other weaknesses which they could no longer conceal. Surely he was content to have her as he first knew her, for he proclaims:

Write no new letters, speak no new words, look no new looks; only tell me, years hence, that the present is alive, that what was once still is—and I am, must needs be, blessed as ever!

And she was content to remain in the state of invalidism—which she was enjoying—for she writes to him:

Whatever I can feel is for you—and perhaps it is not less for not being simmered away in too much sunshine, as with women accounted happier. I am happy besides now—happy enough to die.

Before me is one of the letters of Marianna Alcoforado to her French lover. I wish we had the space to print it here. It gives us a certain joy to realize that these letters have kept her name before us through four centuries, while the worthless one who received the missives and scattered them among his friends makes no impression upon us. The last one is unfinished—sent to him that way, as though she felt the futility of words. Yet "words are the only things that live." She was a nun in Portugal when he met her—a girl. She died at eighty—still a nun.

The beauty of expression of these letters leads on to a new train of thought. A young woman, knee deep in our literary field, once admitted that out of a dozen letters she wrote to her admired one she sent only three, for the others were really too good for him. And, indeed, there is something noble in an author scattering pearls of thought free of charge before a plain mortal when each idea has a market value. "In the *billet-doux* or in the notebook," could be the test of the love of the *litterati*; and if any man cries "in the *billet-doux* and the notebook," he will be a good provider, but he will steal plots from out the baby's crib.

Instinctively when speaking of famous letters one specializes on the love of man and woman, and more especially woman. Edward Fitzgerald admits to Allan that

"I have a very young-lady-like partiality to writing those that I love," yet most of his fine kindly messages now in print are to his own sex. And it must be that there is more love in friendship than we admit in this sturdy, slap-on-the-shoulder age. It is probable that love letters, good or bad, are still warming the postman's burden, but I am willing to be convinced that there are as many expressions of friendly affection sent from man to man, or woman to woman, as in *autres fois*. Correspondence exists at present for the getting of something—be it girl or money; and no friendship ripens under pursuit, or, strangely enough, by any of the methods that develop passion. Since in time letters become unvarnished history, what a friendless lot the coming years will think us! Let us place the value of a stamp now and then upon the ones who are dear even though they bring us nothing in coin or emotion.

One is inclined to take issue with Fitzgerald when he lays at the door of a romantic young lady the desire to write. In other times, at least, an unseen force thrust a balky pen into the hand of the man in love, and, once started, he drove his steed with skill. I believe that there are more published letters of men extant than there are of women, possibly for the reason that women hoard what men discreetly burn, whereas letters written by men to men are more valued than those women send to each other.

It is more criminal to destroy a good letter than to deface an epitaph, and a well constructed message worthy of print will do more to eulogize the dead than any graven laud of praise. We need not be known to make the letter of use. Let it be of value and let it be preserved, and it will find its way upon a bookshelf as a faithful chronicler of its time and an ineffaceable monument to the composer.

Should not this prompt one, then, to write? We of THE SMART SET think so, and propose to do our part to revive this great but obsolescent art. Living in a commercial age, it seems to us best to put the affair upon a commercial basis; and we therefore offer the sum of \$150—

fifty dollars each, respectively—for the three best love, friendship or human interest letters sent to the magazine that conform to the following conditions:

The letter should be typewritten, and of not unreasonable length.

The heading of the letter must specify the relative position of the sender and the recipient—whether a husband writes to his wife, or a woman writes to her affianced, etc.

The writer must specify the penname to be used. Stamps must accompany the manuscripts, should the contributors wish them returned.

We reserve the privilege of publishing the letters at our regular rates.

The contest opens with this number, and will continue until further notice; and the judges will announce the awarding of the prizes in the June number.

All letters must be addressed to "THE SMART SET, Department L," 452 Fifth Avenue, New York City.

We have called this department of the magazine "The Trunk in the Attic," but we would not have you take the title too literally. The trunk in your attic may contain a prize winner, but so, it is quite as probable, does your brain. As a flip to the imagination we suggest a few themes:

- A woman to a woman friend—or to a girl.
- A man to a man friend—or to a boy.
- A wife to her husband.
- A husband to his wife.
- A woman to the man she loves.
- A man to the woman he loves.
- A man to a girl who has jilted him.
- A husband to an extravagant wife.
- A father to the son who has just gone to college.
- A woman to the man who has found she once loved another.
- A married woman to a woman who is about to marry.
- A girl to her lover, accepting his proposal.

We have mentioned this idea to a few of our old contributors. All of them gave it an enthusiastic welcome; and one, whose name is known from sea to sea, has already sent us the letter which follows:

FROM A WOMAN OF TWO MINDS TO A MAN OF ONE IDEA

The Willows, June 16, 1911.

DEAR SIR:

That I am paying any attention whatever to your letter, in which you seek but utterly fail to explain the words you spoke last night, is due solely to your threat that if you do not hear from me you will force an interview at whatever cost. I repeat that whatever sentiment of friendship or deeper feeling may have dwelt in my heart is dead, and so thoroughly dead that nothing can revive it. An interview would be the merest waste of time. Please do not attempt one.

ELAINE COLFAX.

P. S.—I understand why you seek an interview. You know well how I thrill at the sound of your voice, and how it sends the blood running riot through my veins and sets my heart beating so wildly I cannot control it. It has been so from the first. I am afraid by day, for I know one word from you is enough to sweep me into your arms, trembling and clinging to you; and I am afraid by night, for even my dreams are not my own, but of you. Even last night, when my heart was hardened against you, you crept into my dreams and with one word and one smile made my sad heart leap for joy.

I cannot, must not see you! Your smile is to me like the odor of wine to the drunkard; your words are to me like the scent of the poppy to the opium eater, and the touch of your hand—Oh, have mercy on me! Have mercy on me!

Oh, sweetheart, I cannot—cannot give you up! I fear you, dearest, so be kind; I am weak—be magnanimous; I am your slave—be gentle with me. Say to me what you will, and I will smile; treat me as you will, and I will worship you; do with me as you will, for I am drunk with love; but come to me, sweetheart, come to me! Come!

E.

You get the idea? You can say what you please to us, and we shall not answer back. Sign your own name or not, as you wish. You dare even date your letter. You can be a husband, a damsel, a lover, or a wife—as you will. You can keep your name green forever, but you need not wait a century for the recognition. It will come immediately, and—crowning glory in this era—the remuneration will be commensurate with your medium of perpetuity.



A MAN seldom has to tell his love—most girls are pretty good guessers.

SHOPPING FOR THE SMART SET

By Marion C. Taylor

THE SMART SET SHOPPING DEPARTMENT will be glad to offer suggestions or answer questions regarding shopping and the New York shops. Readers of THE SMART SET inquiring for names of shops where articles described are purchasable should enclose a stamp for reply, and state page and month. Address: "EDITOR, SMART SET SHOPPING DEPARTMENT."

THE clothes from abroad are here, and in a week or so the "openings" will begin. If I am any judge, the winter showing will please madam even more than the spring things did, for while there are no startling changes—no *jupe culotte*, thank heaven!—the showing is so beautiful and the ideas are so appropriate that Americans ought to be universally pleased.

Before I actually describe those which appealed to me I shall try to note the few novelties which have appeared and point out the general tendency of the mode.

I see a great deal of a peculiar machine-stitching embroidery which outlines the pattern in chain stitch effect. Paquin uses it on serge frocks, Poiret on suits, and occasionally one sees it on wraps. It is frequently done in a frankly bold color contrasting with the background. I saw it on a serge frock from Poiret last spring, so possibly he is its sponsor. It is a pretty novelty and ought to prove popular.

With the exception of macramé, most of the laces used are of the finest and most delicate variety—malines, Battenberg and filmy novelty laces. In spite of all the rumors to the contrary, skirts are still very narrow, although almost all of those for day wear are shirred into the belt in the back and show the slightly raised waistline. Sleeves on daytime frocks are mostly long and tight fitting to the wrist, many times draping midway between elbow and shoulder to sim-

ulate a cap effect. I am ashamed to say that this is a black-and-white season, for it seems that that is the cry every year; but truly I never saw so many afternoon gowns of this combination, mostly velvets or satins with a plentiful use of white lace over black. Nothing is in better taste, however, or more generally popular, and I suppose that is the answer.

For street use I saw so many pretty combinations of blue serge and black satin that a choice would be difficult. The newest suits are of *velour de laine*, otherwise known as velvet velour, of which I spoke last month, and what a man called two-faced cloths—the double-faced vicunas and the like, which are very flexible and show dull blues or greens on the right side and soft-toned plaids on the reverse. For more formal suits, usually three-piece affairs, I see mostly fancy velvets, odd striped effects, in taupe, mole and other soft inconspicuous shades, beautifully trimmed with plain silks, laces, chiffon and fur and brightened with touches of metallic embroidery. For evening wear brocades are the smartest things, if one is old enough to wear them, and pailletted chiffons are as popular as ever, showing crystal and steel and silver effects with little or no gold, but on the more youthful frocks no little use of artificial flowers. Callot and Beer show almost every evening frock of brocade cut up in the center or side front in an inverted V which discloses, after our dressmakers

suggested it, a delicate petticoat of chiffon and lace but which originally revealed the ankle of the model. Fortunately American buyers have come to realize that there are some things we will not stand for no matter what Paris says; conditions are very different over here, and may they remain so!

Evening wraps, like the frocks, are chiefly notable for the beauty and daring of the color combinations and the plentiful use of wide, heavy gold laces in bands of about fifteen to twenty inches in width. Velvets are a little more in use than brocades or satins, but one sees the handsomest of all fabrics employed and combined with furs and wonderful jeweled fastenings. Many of the models are straight and square in effect, this idea being accentuated by the trimming which often runs straight around the bottom and straight across the shoulders from one end of the sleeve to the other. Other models drape gracefully and fasten at one side with huge ornaments. *Velour de laine* is the smartest fabric for outing coats, although a new lightweight polo cloth comes in beautiful colorings with attractive patterns on the reverse side. One must be most careful this season in selecting a coat for this purpose for the country has gone mad over cheap coats of double-faced materials and it is well to get as far away as possible from this idea. I have always approved of the regulation man's coat of tweed which achieves its smartness by its matter-of-fact usefulness and inconspicuousness combined with its correct cut. But for anyone who feels the weight of such a coat—and they are sometimes a drag when worn over a suit—these new coats of *velour de laine* are just the thing, for they weigh almost nothing and are warm as toast.

Street Frocks

And now to particularize, I shall describe a few of the smartest frocks which embodied these new points and which will probably be popular. Madame Paquin is proverbially successful with suits and one-piece frocks—almost too much so, for only the other day six

women in that well known model of hers shown in silk serge last spring lunched at the Ritz at one time, to the amusement of several of them; however, they might all console themselves that they had on the most successful frock of the season. This fall she has sent us a serge and satin model which combines most of the good points of the season. It is built essentially on diagonal lines, another mark of the fall. The serge reaches from one shoulder to the opposite side of the belt, and the skirt repeats the idea, a wide, backturning rever of the serge on both skirt and waist showing the new machine embroidery in a brilliant king blue. The rest of the frock is satin, and the long, tight sleeves show a combination of the two with the simulated cap effect. At the belt a square motive of embroidery shows bright Oriental colors as a relief. A shop on the Avenue is showing this frock for only seventy-five dollars. Beer, who has in my opinion sent the most attractive collection of frocks shown this year, is responsible for another equally successful model a trifle more formal. The serge forms a pointed tunic in back, which is braided at the point, and the two points meet at the knee in front. The remainder of the skirt is satin, closed with buttons down the entire front; the waist is mostly of the satin, the serge appearing in squares front and back.

In less expensive frocks of this description I saw two that appealed to me greatly. One was a combination of blue serge and black-and-white checked velvet, trimmed with white buttons. The skirt had a tunic of the serge which slanted from the left side of the waistline to within about fifteen inches from the bottom, where it was cut off in a slant to the back, eventually appearing again on the other side of the front opening about five inches deeper. The underneath part was of the check velvet, which also showed a little where the wide revers of the waist narrowed at the neck.

The second one showed a very similar skirt, opening over narrow black-and-white striped velvet trimmed with white buttons stitched on with black. The waist had a deep lower rever of the vel-

vet edged with a band of white broadcloth, trimmed with groups of buttons and above it a second rever of the white broadcloth. The net yoke had a trimming of tiny buttons, and the whole made an exceptionally smart frock at the reasonable price of thirty-nine fifty.

Suits

Bernard has sent to a house noted for the size and diversity of its stock a very good model on the order of a Norfolk in dark blue plaid ratine, which is still in use. Trimmed with revers of white, which are ever so good, this makes an unusually attractive youthful model.

Doucet shows here a reversible vicuna, more of the plaid side of it showing in the skirt and a great deal of the blue on the coat. Smoke pearl buttons with black rims give it a needed touch. An Avenue house shows an excellent model from Poiret, who seems a trifle more sane this season. It is of a beautiful tone of violet smooth cloth combined with black velvet, machine stitched in the violet shade. The coat, belted at the waist, shows a peplum, and is a little out of the ordinary.

At another shop I saw an appealing suit for an older woman of a wonderfully soft blue and brown shade of faille silk. The coat was a simple cutaway model, quite long and edged with skunk, which also banded the skirt. The latter had an overskirt which opened like an inverted V from the waist, and the Watteau-like box plait in back was held into the fur band at the bottom.

More Formal Suits

The three-piece suits are especially successful as frocks but not always so when combined with coats. Often the coat is too severe, and the whole idea is sacrificed unless handsome furs are added. However, at a very exclusive dressmaking establishment I saw several models that are likely to be popular. One of black velvet showed on the dress a lovely deep-pointed collar in back of fine Battenberg lace. In front an inner

vest of white satin closed with the familiar bullet satin-covered buttons, while the colorless yoke was of a simple white net. The skirt, like the waist, buttoned with satin-covered buttons and satin-bound buttonholes its entire length. It shirred slightly into the waistband in back, and was finished at one side with a satin sash. The coat was beautifully cut to give a high-waisted effect, and had a collar inset with ermine which gave it a rich finish. I have seldom seen a coat which accentuated one's slender lines to better advantage. An Avenue house is showing a beautiful Martial et Armand model of taupe velvet finely striped in a peculiar way with narrow lines of black. The waist is mostly of chiffon of the same shade, almost entirely covered with a handsome thread lace, which also appears below the belt in peplum effect. The coat, which is almost knee depth, shows a back and front panel of the same tone faille silk, while the skirt shirs on a yoke hidden by the fall of lace from the waist.

Afternoon Gowns

Cheruit, who used to send us such pretty things, is almost unheard of today, but the one model of hers I unearthed was as refined and appealing as ever. Of a soft tan shade, almost a biscuit, it had a beautifully draped skirt like most of the frocks for this wear, and had as a combination dull violet blue chiffon over fine venise lace. A black crape meteor was, I think, from Callot; and to its sparing use of white was due its success. The very simple waist opened in front like an ellipse to show white satin. The opening was trimmed at one side with black satin buttons covered with white lace, and at the other with black buttonholes bound in white. This same idea was repeated at the side of the tunic on the skirt. The waist showed a pointed collar and cuffs of a novelty thread lace, and three of the lace-covered buttons finished the waistline in back where the skirt shirred into it. The tunic in back ended a little above the ankles and showed the underskirt slit up to that depth.

Evening Costumes

It does seem as though the French makers put most of their time and thought into their evening costumes, for they are so beautiful as almost to defy description.

The brocades are magnificent, and the cut and drapery complete gowns that are truly regal in appearance. Beer has been especially successful, followed by Madame Paquin, who may be credited with reviving the train. As one buyer expressed it, "at madame's opening the model was in one room and the train two rooms behind her." The handsomest gown I have seen, which to my mind simply could not be improved upon, came from Beer. Of a soft blue and silver brocade, the skirt was so cut that a point of the material came in the center front at knee depth and gave a slender line impossible to describe. The brocade was sparingly draped to a little above the waistline, and the remainder of the skirt was severely plain, ending in a one-sided pointed train, still the smartest thing. The waist was composed of a soft cream lace—over a flesh-colored chiffon foundation—about ten or twelve inches wide, which draped softly in surplice fashion, to be caught up a little at one side of the front and finished with a large wine-toned rose and another of a delicate pink. The waist proper was cut into a deep V in back, the accepted cut this season, and set over this like a court train was a width of the lace, edged at one side by a fine gold lace and at the other by a fine line of brilliants. This court train effect dropped straight to the ground, where it was looped up and ended at one side at about hip length. One of Madame Paquin's most notable frocks is so difficult to describe that I can but suggest its points. A combination of old gold tricot flesh pink and steel, it hung diagonally from one side to the other—one sleeve of the old gold, the other of flesh pink. The belt of curious steel beading was exaggerated in length, being almost at the hips, while the train lined in black was square and long. One of Callot's was of a silver cloth shot with yellow. It showed the

inverted V-shaped opening in the center front, held in this instance by an ornament of brilliants and showing a petticoat of maline lace over flesh mousseline. A marvelously draped bodice was further enhanced by a band of heavy macramé. Nothing but tulle straps held it up over the shoulders; and not the least of the novelty of the frock lay in the train, which was composed of three fishtail points, the center one a little longer than those at the sides.

Youthful Evening Frocks

I enjoyed a preliminary peep at a collection of evening frocks yesterday that were the most fascinating and delectable creations for young women I have ever seen assembled at one time.

My favorite—and such a choice is most difficult—was composed of several layers of delicate pink chiffon over an under petticoat of fine cream net, trimmed with bands of fine maline lace and from knee depth tiny garlands of apple blossoms with a delicate turquoise blue bow at each end. These garlands were scattered artistically over the skirt and again appeared under each small sleeve. The under chiffon tunic reached to the bottom of the skirt, and had a delicate band of crystal trimming down center front and back. A second tunic reached to knee depth, and had a little wider band of crystal trimming running around its edge. The simple waist gave a surplice effect, and one side of the back was trimmed with a row of apple blossoms. Where the crystal trimming was used at the belt, on the waist to edge the surplice and at the edge of the sleeves, it was shown over a blue silver cloth, further carrying out the color scheme. Beer was responsible for this, the prettiest of them all.

A soft, frilly model of chiffon was simplicity itself. The skirt showed a V-shaped opening at the left side to about knee depth, and this was filled in with tiny fluffy ruffles of the chiffon and edged at either side with a trailing vine of morning glories in all their natural tones. These were repeated where the ruffle-trimmed fichu crossed at the waistline.

A delicate pink net finely side-plaited was trimmed with ruffles treated in the same manner and a vine of tiny white hyacinths. This was only seventy-five dollars, and for so distinguished a frock was most reasonable.

A soft chiffon of a delicate lavender and turquoise blue was a poem of color, and trimmed with tiny rococo roses in deep dull tones, it was noticeably good-looking. Madame Paquin contributed a quaint 1830 affair of pink chiffon, so high-waisted as to show just a puff trimmed like the skirt with a frill of soft lace on either side of a band under which was run a ribbon of the most delicate blue. The whole was highly suggestive of Romney, Greuze and the like.

Misses' Frocks

Essentially for debutantes, and quite moderate in price, were some charming frocks I saw recently. One, of pale blue taffeta seeming to change into white, was trimmed with tiny prim bows down the front of both waist and skirt. These were piped with taffeta or satin of a shade just a bit darker. The quaint waist had a collarless net yoke and a peplum effect, which was held in by a wide belt finished with a flat group of dull pink taffeta roses. Two bands with ruffles of the silk at either side finished the bottom of the skirt.

A delicate lavender taffeta was oddly caught in around the feet and held by tiny bouquets of flowers. The waist had a fichu of maline lace ruffles alternately edged with narrow silver fringe and gold lace. These little frocks are so appropriate for schoolgirls, and each distinct in itself.

At another shop very successful with this type of frock I saw a delicate white affair having a soft white satin drop with a chiffon tunic edged with crystal fringe. A band of maline lace about fourteen inches wide was edged with a delicate band of soft-toned roses combined with a little metallic ribbon. The roses again appeared on the waist. Another pretty blue chiffon model had a full tunic edged with two frostlike silver lace ruffles headed by tiny pink roses.

The same idea was repeated on the waist, which was finished by a silver girdle. A lovely color combination showed a blue satin slip with soft wide pink ribbons crossing a little below the waistline and widening out till they tied in a lovely bow in back at the bottom of the skirt. The whole was covered with chiffon of the most delicate orchid shade trimmed in maline lace and crystal fringe.

Furs

The chief note in the season's furs is the extensive use of combinations. With the exception of the "animal sets" of fox and the like (and many times these are combinations of black and white fox) one sees almost all sets and coats made of one, two or more furs, velvet, chiffon, embroidery or anything at all to make them attractive. The new fur of the season is "Russian rat," mouselike in color with a delicate silvery sheen, a little longer-haired than mole but otherwise greatly resembling it and treated in the same manner, the skins worked in patterns. It is used chiefly as a decoration and combines with mole, seal or ermine—best I think with seal. Mole is more in use than ever and is combined a great deal with plain ermine, not showing the tails. In the long-haired furs cross fox will be run to the ground. Fischer is a good choice if one selects good dark skins, and as smart as anything I know is blue fox, which is, you know, a delicate soft light-brown shade, admirably becoming to anyone with a bit of color, and especially so to the brown-haired types of women. Pointed fox has seen its day as far as smartness goes. Unfortunately few of us can afford the ever beautiful silver fox—the real black fox is seldom seen, being priceless, and the variety we see over here has been rather cheapened. Lynx is no longer fashionable although very becoming to many, while white fox is always good, especially for fresh young faces, although it is not advisable for steady wear. We see little mink except in the wonderful long coats, so the choice is rather limited. In the long-haired furs the favor lies

with blue fox, fischer, skunk, white fox and cross fox, while in the short-haired variety mole and Hudson seal and ermine are the popular choice, with a little showing of baby caracul, all made into the long graceful wide stoles which are wrapped around in a new manner this year. Starting with the center of the stole in the front at the waistline, it is brought to the back high up under the arms like a girdle, and crossing over the shoulders the ends hang in front to a little below the waistline, the stole being wide enough to act as kimono sleeves over the arms and the whole giving the effect of a smart jacket admirable for wear over a one-piece street frock.

At a shop on the Avenue I saw a beautiful collection of long coats from abroad. From Beschoff David one in moleskin was made entirely on the new diagonal lines from shoulder to hem, just as if one were wrapped in it. This line, which seemingly wound round the body, was accentuated by a border of the moleskins treated in a key design and edged with mole ball fringe.

In another shop well known for its furs I saw a long plain straight coat of mole finished with taupe fox at the high tight collar and cuffs, that was lined with the same-toned velour embossed chiffon and might be worn reversed for greater elegance. Here I also saw several smart short coats of baby caracul, one beautifully enhanced by an ermine rever.

Fur Sets

At a small establishment recently branched out from a prominent French house I saw not only some of the prettiest coats and sets of furs but found the prices so much below those on the Avenue as to be really worthy of note. For instance, sets of white fox consisting of a one-skin animal scarf and a one-skin muff of beautiful long-haired skins were only sixty dollars. The same was true of sable fox and cross fox, while black fox was but seventy dollars. Combinations of skunk and velvet, long stoles and large muffs, were ninety-five dol-

lars; and those of mole and velvet were one hundred and twenty-five dollars. The same idea in Hudson seal and skunk was one hundred and fifty dollars, and all these sets showed the finest possible workmanship, delicate chiffon over satin linings and other signs of the best execution. I saw an exceptionally smart short jacket to the hips, of mole, trimmed with skunk and a touch of dull green velvet, that was very reasonable, for one hundred and ninety-five dollars. A unique set of caracul and fischer had three fischer skins, and showed odd chenille embroidery on the velvet inset into the caracul; and was reasonably priced at one hundred and ninety-five dollars. A mole and ermine set of exceptional *chic* was only one hundred and forty dollars, and an odd set of black fox had three skins in it and was only seventy dollars.

Men's Coats

Men's coats are here and are exceptionally well made and cut. There is only space for a brief description. One of the most unusual is called "The Guards," being a copy of the one that famous regiment wears. Its distinguishing feature is an inverted box plait in the back which opens from midway between collar and belt to the bottom, but is held in place by a plain straight belt across the back. I admired it in a plain dark blue Whitney cloth. It was priced at forty-five dollars, while the double-breasted one was fifty dollars. The "Aintree," in a single-breasted coat, was loose and straight and shown in a wonderful line of tweeds, chevots, etc., an excellent coat for sporting, racing and general knockabout wear. It was appropriately finished with leather buttons, had two huge pockets and was forty-six inches long—price thirty-eight dollars. The "Chesterfield" a trifle more conservative, forty-four inches long, was thirty-five dollars. The Balmacaans, those slip-on affairs with huge armholes reaching to the waist, are still as popular as ever, and are shown here in a very smart line of tweeds for forty-five dollars.

SOMETHING PERSONAL

By the Publisher

ALWAYS a literary success, *THE SMART SET* from its second year has also "made money." Indeed, not so very long ago the profits to the former owner exceeded \$100,000 per year. In looking over the figures of preceding years, I wondered if the contents of the magazine at that time were really better than now, so this summer I put in the hands of an expert some sixteen volumes—four years—for exhaustive analysis. The outcome was interesting, instructive, even amusing. One fact it proved conclusively: *THE SMART SET today* is better in every respect than at any period in the past. As for the future, our manuscript safe never held so many riches.

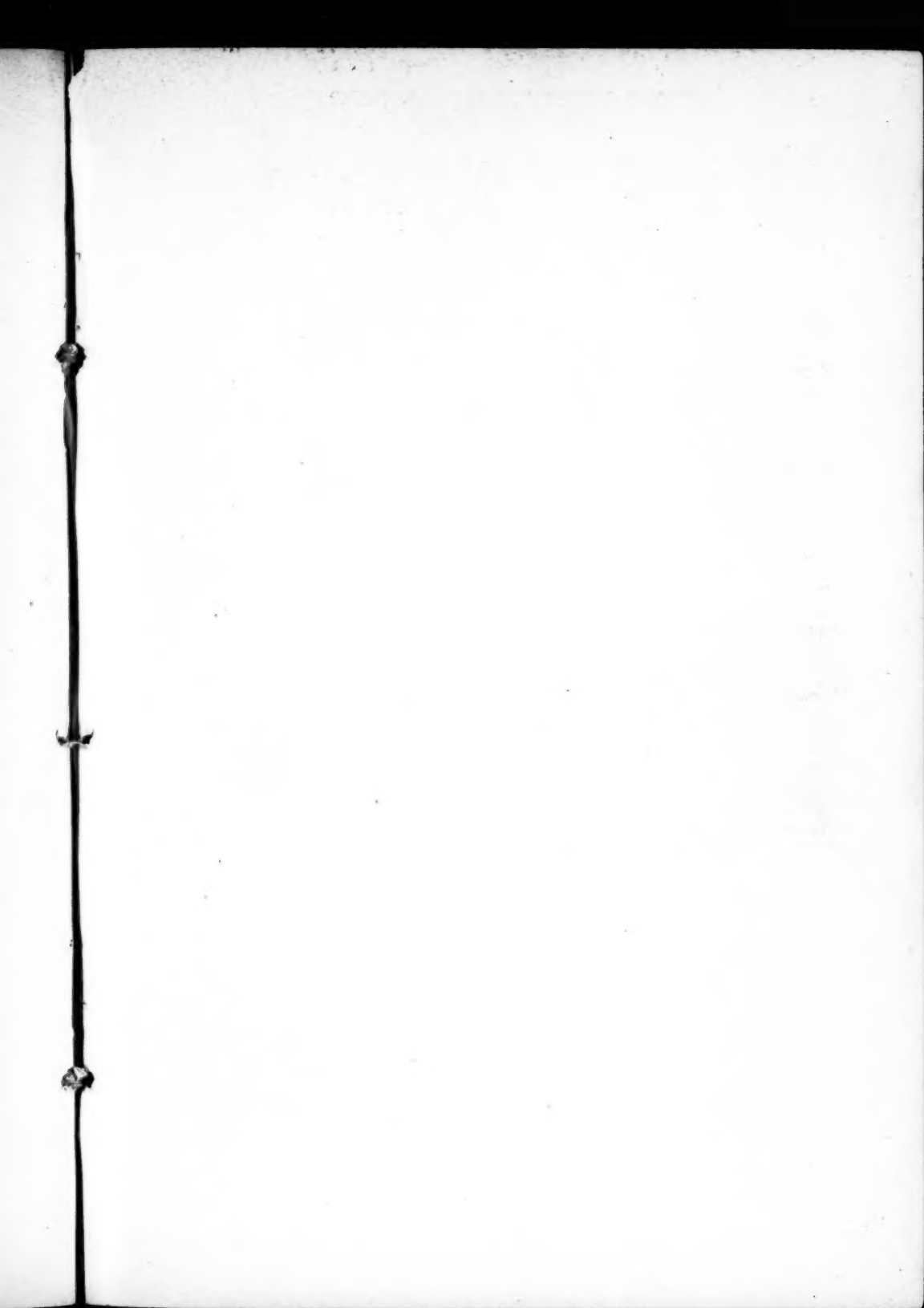
Another thing we did was to write to a thousand subscribers and ask them to give us their views on certain questions. The responses were of the kind which bring joy to a publisher's heart, and they were greatly appreciated. The question: "How do you like our frontispieces?" was not asked. Yet we should like our friends to give us their opinion of those that have thus far appeared. We have others no less striking to follow: André Castaigne has evoked, in his masterly style, the grand passion of Antony and Cleopatra; Nadaud's beautiful poem "Carcassonne," of which uncounted translations have been made, has been interpreted by Rose Cecil O'Neill in a way altogether unique, while Vernon Howe Bailey, whose delicate drawing accompanied Edwin Markham's great sonnet "Bagatelle" in the July *SMART SET*, will contribute a series on "Little Known Paris," the first of which will be found in this number.

Beginning also with this issue, we in-

vite your coöperation in a new department, called *The Trunk in the Attic*, which Mrs. Hale introduces to you on page 162. I believe that this feature will prove highly entertaining. We don't want it too serious—or too jocose. Read what Mrs. Hale has to say about the obsolescent art of letter writing, and then see what you can do to bring about a renaissance.

We are in a very happy frame of mind these days. It is fine to breathe the atmosphere of success, to realize that our circulation is steadily mounting; that we have retained the good will of those thousands of old readers who have "never missed a copy from the initial number," and won a great body of new friends who had but to know to appreciate *THE SMART SET IDEA*.

Only one thing is lacking—just a few more advertising pages. *THE SMART SET* has reached a stage where it can truly and unreservedly be described as a high class medium for the announcements of high grade houses; but many advertisers judge the value of a magazine by the quantity of advertising it contains. Strange, but they really do. But we are making even now a creditable showing in our advertising section, and in this issue the amount exceeds that of any other issue for over three years. It will be a question of only a little time when the limit will be reached. For, in the interest of our readers, there will be a limit—a limit which will be maintained by selection, careful censorship and an increased price. The greater success of this magazine must be achieved on such a high plane and by such scrupulous methods as the reader, no less than the advertiser, can heartily endorse.





ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

*From the painting made for The Smart Set Magazine by André Castaigne
(See page 167)*